

# UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

FROM THE

Creation of the World

TO THE

BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

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# UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

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### CHAPTER VII.

ROMAN HISTORY continued—War with the Samnites—Devotion of Decius—Disgrace of the Caudine Forks—Popular Pretensions increase—the Plebeians admitted to the Priesthood—War with Pyrrhus, King of Epirus—his Defeat—Conquest of all Italy by the Romans—Incorporation of the conquered Nations—Manner in which the Rights of Citizenship were extended.

Soon after this time a war began with the people of Samnium; and it was this war which led the Romans to the conquest of all Italy. The Samnites inhabited a district to the south of the Roman territory, and separated from it by Latium. They had hitherto had no hostile interference with the Romans, and there was even a treaty of alliance subsisting between them; but the Latins, Hernici, Æqui, and Volsci, being now subdued, that is to say, so weakened that they were obliged either to become subjects or allies of the republic, the Romans now came to be the immediate neighbours of the Samnites, and of course their enemies. The city of Capua gave occasion to the war.

Capua was the principal city of Campania, one

of the finest and most fertile countries of Italy. This city then was extremely opulent and luxurious. The Samnites, a poor but warlike people, were allured by the riches of their neighbours, and invaded Campania. The inhabitants of Capua, after some feeble attempts to resist the invaders, implored aid from the Romans. The senate answered, that their alliance with the Samnites prevented them from giving anything else than their compassion. "If, then," said the Capuans, "you will not defend us, you will at least defend yourselves; and from this moment we give ourselves, our cities, our fields, and our gods to the Romans, and become their subjects." The senate accepted the donation, and ordered the Samnites immediately to quit their territories. The necessary consequence was a war, in which the Romans were so successful, that in the third campaign the Samnites were glad to conclude a peace, and renew their treaty of alliance.

In the meantime the Latins had recovered strength, and meditated to shake off the Roman yoke. A war was the consequence, memorable only for a singular instance of the most exalted patriotism in the consul Decius. This great man, together with his colleague Torquatus, headed the Roman legions. It is said that both the consuls had had a dream, or seen a vision, which assured them that the infernal gods required that one of the contending armies should be devoted to them, and one of the contending generals; and that the general who should have the heroism voluntarily to devote himself, would thus doom the army of the enemy to certain destruction. The two consuls agreed



to make this heroic sacrifice; and it was resolved between them, as they commanded separate divisions of the army, that he whose division first gave way should immediately devote himself to death. It was in the meantime strictly enjoined to the troops, that no soldier should, during the engagement, advance beyond his rank, as instances of frantic valour were then extremely common. The battle began; and Titus Manlius, the son of the consul Torquatus, being challenged by a Latin captain, accepted the summons, defeated his antagonist, and returned with his spoils to the main army. His father, with a true Roman severity, ordered his head to be struck off for disobedience. The division commanded by Decius having begun to give way, he caused the Pontifex Maximus to perform in haste the ceremony of consecration; then, girding himself closely with his robe, he spurred his horse with fury into the thickest of the enemies' battalions, where he was instantly cut to pieces. The Romans, now confident of success, rushed on, and the Latins were entirely defeated. The conquerors, by pursuing their success, might have annihilated the Latin name; but they chose to deal more humanely with the vanquished foe, and to preserve them in the character of allied states, on whom they imposed separate conditions of peace, according to the different degrees of merit or demerit which each had exhibited.

Meantime the war with the Samnites was renewed and carried on for above ten years, with various success; many of the other states of Italy taking a part in the quarrel. One event which

much humbled the pride of the Romans, was the disgrace they underwent at Caudium. The Samnites, surprising them in a narrow defile near that town, (*Furcæ Caudinæ*,) had it in their power to cut them off to a man. Pontius, the general of the Samnites, made the whole Roman army, with the consuls at their head, naked and disarmed, pass under the yoke;—a scene described by Livy with great force of natural painting, in the beginning of the ninth book of his history. The historian relates, that when the consuls first informed the army of the fate which the enemy had decreed they should undergo, the soldiers vented their rage in execrations against their commanders, as the authors of this degradation, and were ready to tear them in pieces: but when the dreadful ceremony began, and when they saw the garments torn from the backs of the consuls, and those men whom they had been accustomed to regard with veneration, thus ignominiously treated, every one forgot his own calamity, and, filled with horror, turned aside his eyes, that he might not behold the miserable humiliation of the rulers of his country. It was evening when the Roman army was suffered to pass out of the defile; and when the night came on, naked and destitute of everything, they threw themselves down in despair in a field near the city of Capua. The magistrates, senators, and chief men of the place, repaired to the spot where they lay, and endeavoured to comfort and soothe their distress: but they spoke not a word nor ever raised their heads from the ground. The next day they proceeded in the same melancholy dejection to Rome, where

their disaster had occasioned the utmost consternation, and the whole city had gone into mourning.

By the treaty which the Romans signed after the disgrace of the *Furcæ Caudinæ*, they solemnly bound themselves no more to make war against the Samnites; but they fell upon a shameful device to elude the obligation. Posthumius, one of the consuls, advised that the Romans should pay no regard to the treaty; but that he himself, and all who were actively concerned in making it, should be delivered up to the enemy, who might wreak their vengeance on them as they chose. This strange proposal was agreed to. Posthumius and the principal officers were sent in chains to Pontius, the general of the Samnites, who, with a generosity which their conduct had not merited, set them at liberty, though with a keen reproach of their shameful disregard of an obligation universally held most sacred.

We enter not into a minute detail of the war with the Samnites: it is to be found at large in Livy. It affords evidence of one fact of importance, that the Romans had now adopted the policy of exterminating, when they were desirous of securing a conquest. The Æqui, in the space of one campaign, lost forty towns, the greater part of which the Romans entirely demolished, and slaughtered the whole inhabitants.

The popular dissensions suffered very little intermission from these warlike enterprises. The priesthood was now the object of contest, and the pretence used by the patricians for excluding the inferior order from that dignity, was religious

indignation, Pyrrhus ordered the theatres to be shut up, closed the public assemblies where the Tarentines idly consumed the time in frivolous talk, and, mustering the citizens, enjoined a continued and vigorous exercise to every man who was capable of bearing arms. So severely felt was this duty, that it is said a large number of the inhabitants actually fled from their country rather than suffer a deprivation of their usual pleasures.

Pyrrhus was, for some time, successful. The elephants in his army were a novel sight to the Romans, and, for a while, gave him a great advantage. It is said, however, that this experienced general, the first time he came in sight of the Roman legions, was struck with their appearance, and with the military skill displayed in their arrangement. "The disposition of these barbarians," said he, to one of his officers, "does not savour at all of barbarism. We shall presently see what they can perform." And, in fact, he very soon began to find that even his victories cost him so dear, that there was little room to hope for his ever achieving the conquest of Italy. The Romans soon became accustomed to his mode of fighting, and every campaign proved to him more and more unsuccessful. At length, wishing for an honourable pretext for dropping his enterprise, the Sicilians furnished it, by imploring his aid against the Carthaginians. Pyrrhus accordingly embarked his troops for Sicily, and during his absence for two years, the Romans reduced the Samnites, Tarentines, and their allies to extremity. Pyrrhus returned, and made a last effort, near

Beneventum, in the Samnian territory. He was totally defeated, lost 26,000 men, and, taking the first opportunity of giving his allies the slip, he set sail for Epirus. The Samnites, the Tarantines, the Lucanians, Bruttians, and all the other states submitted to the arms of the Romans, who were now, in the 480th year from the foundation of the city, masters of all Italy. It is to be observed, however, that, at this time, *Gallia Cisalpina*, or the country between the Apennines and Alps, was not comprehended under the name of *Italy*.

The policy of the Romans with regard to the nations which they conquered is worthy of some attention. The tribes into which the Roman citizens were divided were formerly, as we have seen, a local distinction. Matters were otherwise at this time. It had become a great exertion of political judgment to arrange the members of which the tribes were composed, as on that arrangement depended the issue of any measures to be carried by popular suffrage, or new laws to be enacted. It was the province of the censors to distribute the citizens in the different tribes. Now, when they formed new tribes from the inhabitants of the conquered countries, they composed these tribes chiefly of the ancient Roman citizens, and transported to Rome the principal men of the conquered nation, whom they ingrafted into the original urban, or rustic, tribes of the commonwealth. Thus two good purposes were at once served. The Roman citizens, who principally composed the new tribes, kept the provinces in

order, and inspired them with an affection for the Roman government; while, on the other hand, the new citizens, dispersed among many of the ancient tribes, and constantly under the eye of Roman magistrates, could have little or no influence in the affairs of the commonwealth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

CARTHAGE, a Phœnician Colony—Early History—Government—Wars—Early History of Sicily—Syracusan Government—Dionysius the Elder—Dionysius the Younger—Dion—Timoleon—Agathocles—Character of the Carthaginians and Romans compared.

As we are now arrived at that period when Rome, mistress of Italy, begins to extend her conquests, and aim at foreign dominion, it is necessary, in order to prepare the mind of the student of history to follow with advantage the detail of the progress of her arms, that he should have some acquaintance with the history of Carthage, and of Sicily.

Carthage, according to the most probable accounts, was founded by a colony of Tyrians, about seventy years before the building of Rome. The colony had the same language, the same laws, the same customs, and exhibited the same national character with the parent state. The early Carthaginian history is extremely uncertain; but from the vigorous industry of that people who were its founders, and their great progress in the arts, we may suppose that the Carthaginians made a rapid advancement. From the time of the elder Cyrus, their marine was formidable. One of the most

ancient naval engagements recorded in history is that in which the Carthaginian fleet, in conjunction with that of the Etruscans, fought against the Phocians of Iona, who were desirous of escaping the yoke of the Persian monarch.

The Carthaginians had by degrees extended their dominion along the whole African coast of the Mediterranean, from the confines of Egypt on the east, to the Pillars of Hercules, or the Straits of Gibraltar. Their capital, in the days of its splendour, that is, during the wars with the Romans, was one of the most magnificent and most populous cities in the universe. The number of its inhabitants is said to have amounted to 700,000; and it had under its sovereignty about three hundred towns along the Mediterranean coast.

We know nothing of the nature of the earliest government of the Carthaginians, that is, during the first four centuries from the foundation of their empire, and very little even of what it was in the latter periods preceding its dissolution. They are celebrated, however, by Aristotle,\* as possessing one of the most perfect constitutions among the ancient republics. They had, like the Romans, two chief magistrates, called *suffetes*, who were

\* Aristotle, whose account of this republic is, on the whole, very obscure, gives this strong proof of the excellence of the Carthaginian government, that from the origin of their state down to his own times, the age of Alexander, "its tranquillity had never been disturbed either by domestic sedition or the tyranny of its government."—*ARIS. de Repub.* lib. ii. cap. 2.



chosen annually, and had powers probably much akin to those of the consuls. They had likewise an elective senate, which deliberated on the most important business of the state: but unanimity was required to give effect to their decrees; for if there was a difference of opinion, the matter was immediately remitted to the assembly of the people. They had a tribunal of one hundred and four judges, chosen from the senate, to whom the generals of their armies were responsible for their conduct; and it was not unusual, as we are told, for this tribunal to punish an unsuccessful general with death. All the powers of government seem to have resided in the *suffetes* and senate, if concurring in opinion; for it was only in case of difference, as already said, that the sentiments of the popular assembly were consulted. Aristotle has noted two circumstances, as defects in the constitution of this republic: the one, that it was lawful for the same individual to exercise different offices of state at the same time; the other, that the poor were excluded from holding all offices of importance in the commonwealth. But the former of these may be found expedient and even necessary in the best regulated governments, and the latter appears to be agreeable to the soundest policy; for in offices of high trust, poverty might often prove too powerful an excitement to a deviation from duty.

The first settlements of the Carthaginians were entirely in the way of commerce. They traded with the nations on the coast of Spain for gold, and, maintaining a constant intercourse with Phœ-

nicia, their parent state, and with the other nations on the coasts of the Mediterranean, they became the commercial agents between the eastern and western parts of Europe. Their naval expeditions were not confined to the Mediterranean. They passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and, coasting along the African shore, formed settlements even as far as the 25th degree of north latitude, that is, three degrees south of the Canary Islands, anciently called *Insulæ Fortunatæ*. Hanno, by order of the Carthaginian senate, sailed upon a voyage of discovery along the African coast to the southward, and wrote himself a very curious account of his navigation; an extract from which, or rather a fragment of a Greek translation of which, is still remaining, entitled the "Periplus of Hanno." It is a valuable remnant of antiquity, written in the style of a plain narrative, without ostentation or embellishment, and very much resembling the journal of a modern navigator. The facts which he relates have nothing of the marvellous, and agree very much with the accounts given by the moderns of the same countries. He observed from his fleet, that in the daytime there was nothing to be seen upon the land, but all was stillness and silence; but in the night he heard the sound of various musical instruments, and saw a great number of fires lighted along the coast: and we know that such is the appearance of great part of the western coast of Africa at this day; that the savages in the daytime retire into the woods to avoid the heat of the sun; that they light great fires in the night to disperse the beasts

of prey; and that they are extremely fond of music and dancing.

The Carthaginians pushed their maritime discoveries likewise to the north of the Straits; they carried on a trade with the ports of Gaul, and even with the southern coast of Britain, whence they drew tin, lead, and copper. They had a settlement in the islands called *Cassiterides*, which are supposed to be the Scilly Islands, on the coast of Cornwall.

At the time of Hannibal it would appear that some degree of taste for Greek literature had prevailed at Carthage. That great man, as Cornelius Nepos informs us, composed several books in the Greek language.\* He had for his preceptor in that language Sosilus, a Lacedæmonian. A Carthaginian, Silenus, is likewise mentioned by Cicero as a writer of history in Greek. Sallust, in his history of the Jugurthine war, mentions books written in the Carthaginian language,† which he had consulted in composing his history of that war. Further proof of Carthaginian learning may be found in the writings of the elder Pliny; and

\* *Atque hic tantus vir, tantisque bellis distractus, non nihil temporis tribuit litteris. Namque aliquot ejus libri sunt Græco sermone confecti: in his ad Rhodios de Cn. Manlii Volsonis in Asia, rebus gestis. . . . Hujus bella gesta multi memoriæ prodiderunt: sed ex his duo, qui cum eo in castris fuerunt, simulque vixerunt, quamdiu fortuna passa est, Silenus et Sosilus Lacedæmonius. Atque hoc Sosilo Hannibal literarum Græcarum usus est docere.—C. NEPOS in vit. Hannib.*

† Ex libris Punicis qui regis Hiempsalis dicebantur interpretatum nobis est.—SALL. *Bell. Jug.* c. xx.

a specimen of the Carthaginian language is preserved in the *Pænulus* of Plautus.\*

The Carthaginians, enriched by commerce and increasing in population, soon found their original territory too small for them, and began to aim at extending it by conquest. They armed successively against the Mauritians, Numidians, and all the neighbouring nations; but as the spirit of war was averse to the habits of an industrious and mercantile people, it was their constant practice to employ mercenary troops, which they levied not only from Africa, but from Spain, Italy, the Mediterranean islands, from Gaul, and even Greece. The first of the Carthaginian wars which authentic history records, is that with the Greek colonies of Sicily. They had certainly, however, long before this period, made settlements on that island. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, proposed an alliance with them against the Greeks, and they concluded that treaty with Xerxes, when he followed out the projects of his father. They engaged to attack the Greeks of Sicily, while he invaded the mother-country.

The early periods of the history of Sicily are no less uncertain than those of Carthage. This country was termed *Trinacria*, from its triangular figure, and obtained afterwards the name of *Sicania*, from the *Sicāni*, who are said to have been originally a people of Spain. The Siculi, an Italian tribe, afterwards took possession of the greater part of the island; and from them it was named Sicilia. The Phœnicians are reported to have

\* Plaut. *Pæn.* Act v. sc. 1.

sent some colonies into this fertile island, before the time of the Trojan war. The Greeks, a considerable while after this period, began to form settlements upon the coasts, and drove the Sicani and the Sicilians into the interior of the country. These Greek colonies brought with them the spirit and manners of their native land—the love of independence, and some knowledge of the arts and sciences.\* A colony of the Corinthians founded Syracuse, which became the most illustrious of the Grecian cities of Sicily; and from Syracuse arose afterwards Agrigentum, Acra, Casmene, Camarine, and several other flourishing towns.

What was the most ancient form of the Syracusan government, we are much at a loss to know. But on the authority of ancient authors, we are assured that it was for a considerable tract of time monarchical; and might long have continued so, had all its sovereigns inherited the eminent virtues and abilities of Gelon, its first monarch, who, though severe in his manners, was one of the best of princes; but his successors abusing their power, and exercising the most despotic tyranny, at last drove their subjects to the necessity of abolishing the regal government; and, as if the example had been contagious, the whole Greek cities of Sicily expelled their tyrannic governors, and entered into a general confederacy to secure their individual freedom and independence.

\* No country, of so narrow bounds, has in ancient times produced more learned men than Sicily. Æschylus, Diodorus Siculus, Empedocles, Gorgias, Euclid, Archimedes, Epicharmus, Theocritus, were all Sicilians by birth.

Sixty years after this period, an obscure man of the name of Dionysius, by great address and the most various abilities, had so ingratiated himself with the people of Syracuse, while in the capacity of one of their magistrates, that he gradually usurped the supreme authority. He was a very able general, and successfully withstood the attempts of the Carthaginians to make themselves masters of Sicily. By his army these formidable invaders, who had obtained possession of a great part of the island, were almost entirely extirpated. Dionysius supported his administration by military force, by extreme severity, and the most rigid despotism; yet there were some features of his character which seemed to indicate a more generous nature. He was fond of literary pursuits, a liberal patron of learned men, and even himself a poet. He contended for the prize of poetry given at the feast of Bacchus, and obtained it; though, if we credit the story told of the poet Philoxenus, this must have been a very partial judgment. Philoxenus, it is said, being invited to dine with Dionysius, and to hear him recite some poetical composition, was the only one of the guests who took the liberty of censuring it; he was condemned to the mines; but being soon after set at liberty, and invited to hear another recitation, he held his peace, when it came to his turn to give his opinion. "What," said Dionysius, "have you nothing to say on this occasion?" "Carry me back to the mines," said Philoxenus. Dionysius, we are told, was not displeased with the answer.

The character of this prince is, on the whole,

ambiguous. It is not improbable that the hatred which the Greeks ever affected to bear to the name of tyrant, has made their historians blacken the character of Dionysius more than he deserved.\* We read of the constant terror he was under of assassination; of his never venturing to harangue the people but from the top of a tower; of the dungeon he contrived for the imprisonment of state-criminals, constructed in the form of the cavity of the ear, which communicating with an aperture in his private apartment, he could distinctly hear any word that the prisoner uttered; of the horror he had of allowing himself to be shaved, and of his making his daughters singe off his beard with nutshells. But how is all this consistent with the certain facts of his commanding his armies in person; his overseeing his numerous artisans employed in the public works; his familiar intercourse with men of science; his magnificent entertainments; and, at length, his dying of a debauch at a public festival? Great allowance must be made for the prejudices of those writers who have given us the character of Dionysius.

After the death of Dionysius the elder, the crown of Syracuse passed without opposition to Dionysius, his son, an idle, weak, and dissolute

\* Dionysius having sent his brother to the Olympic games to contend in his name for the prize of poetry, the Greeks, who detested his name, hissed the reciters off the stage, and tore his brother's rich pavilion to pieces. Lysias, the orator, made a speech on the occasion, in which he undertook to prove that it was an affront to all Greece, and an insult on their sacred solemnities, to allow the compositions of a wicked tyrant to be publicly rehearsed.—*PLUT. Mor.*

prince, whom his father, to repress any premature schemes of ambition, had kept in profound ignorance. Along with the tyrannical disposition of his father, he had the same passion, or at least the same affectation, of a taste for literature. The philosopher, Plato, had been invited to Syracuse, by Dionysius the elder, and had contracted an intimate friendship with Dion, the brother-in-law of Dionysius, of whom, in one of his epistles, he gives this high character, that he had never met with a young man on whom his philosophical principles had made so great an impression. But their effect on Dionysius himself was not so favourable; for, being offended with the freedom which the philosopher used in censuring whatever he disapproved in the maxims and government of the tyrant, the latter ordered him to be sold as a slave in the public market. His disciples paid the price of five minæ for their master, and sent him safe back to Greece. Dion, from an earnest desire of reforming the morals of his kinsman, the younger Dionysius, persuaded him to invite the philosopher once more to return to Sicily. Plato came, and virtue and learning seemed for a while to reign at Syracuse: but their dominion was of short duration; for the corrupted courtiers of Dionysius prevailed on him to banish Dion, and Plato followed his favourite disciple.

The exile of Dion was aggravated by circumstances of the most flagrant injustice and oppression: his property was confiscated, and Arete, his wife, the sister of Dionysius, was by that tyrant compelled to enter into another marriage with a sycophant of his court. The more respectable part



of the Syracusans were indignant at these outrages, which reflected dishonour on the state, and sought earnestly to rid themselves from their yoke. They held a secret correspondence with Dion, whom they prevailed on to aid them in their design of effecting a revolution. With the aid of foreign troops whom he levied in Greece, and supported by all the Syracusans who favoured the cause of liberty, Dion compelled the tyrant to evacuate Syracuse, and seek refuge in Italy. But the austere manners of the virtuous Dion were not suited to a licentious and corrupted people. He lost the affections of his subjects; they forgot his services, and deposed and banished him: he was recalled, indeed, soon after, but to meet with a worse fate: for while he sought to appease the seditions excited by the partisans of Dionysius, he was assassinated by an infamous Athenian, on whom he had bestowed his chief confidence.

Aided by the distractions of Syracuse, consequent on the death of Dion, Dionysius regained the throne, ten years after his expulsion; but his tyrannical disposition inflamed, not mitigated by his misfortunes, soon became so intolerable, that he was expelled a second time, and banished to Corinth: he there ended his days in poverty and obscurity. It is said, that the tyranny of his nature found a congenial gratification in exercising the employment of a schoolmaster.

This last revolution had been effected by the aid of Timoleon, a noble Corinthian, whom his countrymen deputed to restore the liberties of their ancient colony. Timoleon had distinguished himself by an ardent passion for republican freedom, which

had even hurried him into the commission of a shocking crime. Unable to dissuade his brother, Timophanes, from a design of usurping the sovereignty of his native state, he caused two of his friends to assassinate him, in his own presence. This deed, though applauded by his fellow-citizens, was attended by such severe remorse, that he threw up all public employment, and wandered in melancholy dejection for a period of twenty years. He was now, however, summoned to take the command of the expedition to Sicily, and his favourite passion prompted him to obey the summons.

The Carthaginians having some settlements in Sicily, had long earnestly looked to the acquisition of the whole island, and at this time, under the pretext of aiding the Syracusans in the design of dethroning their tyrant, had landed a large force, and seized and garrisoned several of the Sicilian towns. Dionysius, reduced to extremity between the Carthaginian army on the one side, and the troops of Timoleon on the other, chose to enter into a capitulation with the latter, and agreed to abandon his throne, and purchase his life by a voluntary banishment into Greece. Timoleon sent him in a single galley to Corinth. Having delivered Syracuse from her tyrant, he now turned his arms against the Carthaginians, whom he defeated in several battles, and compelled to yield up all their new acquisitions, confining themselves within the limits of their ancient possessions.

Having thus honourably fulfilled the original object of his mission, in giving peace and liberty

to the Syracusans, Timoleon found his aid and alliance eagerly courted by the other republics of Sicily, who desired to follow the example of Syracuse in expelling their domestic tyrants and establishing a free constitution. This purpose successfully accomplished, Timoleon now applied himself to the means of repairing the wasted population of the Syracusan territory, by recalling all those citizens whom the tyranny of the late government had compelled to abandon their country, and by prompting new settlers to resort thither, by every encouragement which good policy could suggest. This truly great man had no sooner brought about a regular and stable administration of government, than he gave an illustrious proof how disinterested had been the motives of his conduct, by resigning all power, and returning to the condition of a private citizen. As such he passed the remainder of his days, highly honoured and beloved by that people who owed to his virtues their liberty and their happiness.

It is not difficult to account for those revolutions to which we have observed the state of Syracuse was so much exposed. This city had acquired great wealth by commerce. The overgrown fortunes of individuals put it in their power not only to stir up factions and cabals, but even to raise armies. The state likewise was in use to employ only foreign troops, and thus afforded a tempting opportunity to strangers to aim at attaining power and influence in the republic. Had there been in Sicily any other state so formidable as to balance the power of Syracuse, we should then have seen in that country nearly the same scenes that we

have observed in Greece. We should have seen the inferior states pass from the alliance of the one to that of the other; associations constantly formed to maintain a balance of power, and at the same time a cordial union of the whole against a foreign enemy. But as the power of Syracuse was not kept down by any formidable rival in Sicily, this circumstance obliged the inferior states who wished to avoid her yoke to seek aid from abroad, and thus Sicily was laid open to the Carthaginians and to the Greeks.

The Syracusans did not long enjoy the liberty and peace to which they had been restored by Timoleon. Agathocles, a man who had risen from a low condition to the first military honours, and the command of their fleets and armies, took advantage of that power to render himself master of the city. Besieged by the Carthaginians in Syracuse, he carried the war into Africa, ravaged the country to the gates of Carthage, and defeated their army in a signal engagement, which had very near proved fatal to their empire. He suffered, however, a signal reverse of fortune. During his absence in Africa the Sicilian states, oppressed by Syracuse, formed a league in defence of their liberties. Agathocles having re-embarked a part of his troops, with the design of chastising this revolt, the Carthaginians in the mean time reduced the remainder of the Syracusan army to such extremity, that even the return of their leader was insufficient to retrieve their losses. Regarding their situation as desperate, Agathocles, with the meanest treachery, abandoned his army in the night, and escaped back to Sicily in a single

vessel, leaving his two sons to the mercy of the Carthaginians, who put them both to death. His vengeance now found an object in reducing the Sicilian states, whose revolt had been the immediate cause of his disasters; but while actively engaged in this purpose, his life was shortened by poison.

The Carthaginians, still intent on the acquisition of Sicily, now invested Syracuse with an immense fleet and an army of 50,000 men. Unable effectually with their own power to resist this overwhelming force, the Syracusans solicited aid from Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who, as we have before seen, had at this time abandoned all hope of achieving the conquest of Italy. He seized this occasion as an honourable pretext for withdrawing his troops from that country. The Syracusans received him with open arms, and put him in possession of their city, their fleet, and the public treasure. Pyrrhus, with this combination of force, was for some time eminently successful; but on a change, as we have before related, this prince thought it his wisest course to drop his schemes of ambition, and return to Epirus. On quitting Sicily, he is said to have exclaimed, "What a beautiful field of battle do we leave for the Romans and Carthaginians!" His prediction was speedily fulfilled, for immediately after began the first Punic war.

The character of the Carthaginians, and that of the Romans, whom we shall now see engaged in war for a long series of years, formed a very remarkable contrast to each other. As this difference of character may, perhaps, be accounted for on one single principle, I shall endeavour very shortly to

unfold that principle, in a few observations on the effects of a commercial life upon the genius, manners, and laws of a nation.

One most natural effect of the commercial spirit is a selfish and interested turn of mind; a habit of measuring every thing by the standard of profit and loss, and a predominant idea that wealth is the main constituent both of public and private happiness. The contrast of character in this respect, between the Romans and Carthaginians, has been finely remarked by Polybius. "In all things," says that judicious writer, "which regard the acquisition of wealth, the manners and customs of the Romans are infinitely preferable to those of the Carthaginians. This latter people esteemed nothing to be dishonourable that was connected with gain. Among them, money is openly employed to purchase the dignities and offices of the state; but all such proceedings are capital crimes at Rome." I am afraid that a contrast so honourable to the Romans, could only have been made with justice in the early periods of the republic; since we know that without an increase of commerce, to which might be attributed the consequent increase of corruption and venality, those vices had attained to as great a height towards the end of the republic at Rome, as ever they had done in Carthage. But wealth acquired by plunder, rapine, and speculation, is yet more corruptive of the manners of a people, than riches acquired by merchandize.

Another effect of the prevalence of the commercial spirit, is to depress the military character of a people, and to render them indisposed to war-

like enterprises. The advancement of trade cannot take place in any high degree, unless a nation is at peace with its neighbours, and enjoys domestic security. The prospect of that precarious gain which arises from warfare, will not weigh against the certain advantages which commerce derives from a state of peace. The art of war will not, therefore, flourish as a profession among a commercial people, and the practice of it will generally be intrusted to mercenary troops. Military rank will be in low esteem, because, when purchased, it ceases in a great degree to be honourable. Thus the Carthaginians, though certainly not inferior by nature to the Romans in courage and military prowess, were become so from habit and education. The armies of the empire were not composed of its native subjects; they were mercenaries, and, therefore, had no natural affection for that soil which they were called to defend, or that people who were nothing more than their paymasters. Hence the signal inferiority of their armies to the Romans, unless when commanded by Carthaginian generals of high natural military genius, who could bring their force into action as a great machine directed by one simple moving power.

Public spirit and a high tone of national virtue are rarely to be found in states whose principal object is commerce. Patriotism cannot flourish, where the spirit of gain predominates. Each individual, feeling interest separate from, and often incompatible with that of the state, it is not surprising that what regards only the good of the

community should have but small influence; and even that private advantage, and the enrichment of individuals, should be the main-spring of public measures.

But this, it may be said, is the dark side of the picture. Let us, therefore, attend to those beneficial consequences, which may naturally be attributed to the prevalence of the commercial spirit in a nation.

And of these, what immediately strikes us as the most obvious, is the general diffusion of industry. Among a commercial people, the faculties both of mind and body are of necessity almost continually employed. Invention is ever on the stretch to discover new sources of gain; and the enterprising spirit of the more opulent furnishes constant occupation to the mechanic, the manufacturer, and the labourer.

Inseparably connected with the general diffusion of industry, is a spirit of frugality. Riches have their full value when purchased by the labour either of the mind or body, and what costs dear will not be frivolously expended. Justin has remarked the parsimony as well as the industry of the Tyrians. Strabo and Cicero give the same character of the people of Marseilles, and Diodorus Siculus of the Carthaginians. In modern times we observe the association of the same qualities among the Dutch and the Chinese.

Another necessary consequence of the prevalence of commerce, is a regularity and strictness of the national police, a severity of the laws with



respect to mutual contracts and obligations, and a consequent security in the transactions of individuals with each other.\* I know not whether a certain degree of refinement in manners, at least to the length of general courtesy and affability both to those of the same nation and to foreigners, be not a consequence of the spirit of trade; a refinement of manners, however, very different from that of a luxurious people, where the laws of behaviour arise chiefly from motives of ease and pleasure, or are dictated by gallantry or a high point of honour.

Science is likewise in many respects greatly indebted to commerce. Thus astronomy, navigation, general mathematics, mechanics, and indeed all sciences subservient to practical utility, are greatly advanced by it, and derive a vast encouragement from the demands which it occasions for the productions of the useful arts. With regard to literature there is greater doubt. The labour of the head in those productions which tend only to amusement, or at least a refinement of the intellectual powers, without any obvious consequence as to the practical business of worldly life, will not, it is probable, meet with much encouragement among a people whose views extend no farther than the substantial acquisitions of wealth and property.

Such are the principal effects of the spirit of

\* When the Roman writers inveigh against the *Punica fides*, the censure applies to their character in war; and even in that respect, it may well be questioned whether Roman character stood in any higher degree of estimation.

commerce on the character and manners of a nation; and such accordingly we find to constitute the principal features of the Carthaginian character opposed to the Roman.

## CHAPTER IX.

FIRST PUNIC WAR—First Naval Victory of the Romans—Invasion of Africa—Regulus—Termination of the War—SECOND PUNIC WAR—Hannibal passes the Alps—His Victories in Italy—Battle of Cannæ—Hannibal winters in Capua—Siege of Syracuse—Defended by Archimedes—Battle of Zama—and End of Second Punic War—Defeat of Philip II. of Macedon—of Antiochus, king of Syria—Cato the Censor—Accusation of Scipio Africanus—His Character—Scipio Asiaticus—War with Perseus and Reduction of Macedonia—THIRD PUNIC WAR, AND DESTRUCTION OF CARTHAGE.

It has been justly remarked that the Romans, although an ambitious people, did not begin to form plans of extensive conquest, till they had sufficient strength to undertake them with advantage. The triumph which their arms had obtained over Pyrrhus, the most able and the most experienced general of his time, seemed to give them an assurance of success in any military enterprise in which they should engage.

The first Punic war took its rise from the following cause. The Mamertines, a people of Campania, had taken possession of Messina, one of the Sicilian towns allied to Syracuse. Hiero, king of Syracuse, had marched against these invaders, who, conscious that they were unable to withstand so powerful an antagonist, applied for aid, first to the Carthaginians, and afterwards, from rational

fear of being enslaved by this power, to the Romans. Although this was a very unjustifiable quarrel, the Romans made no scruple to take a part; and they sent a large army, which engaged and defeated the united forces of the Syracusans and Carthaginians. The king of Syracuse having now experienced to his cost the power of the Roman arms, was glad to court their alliance; flattering himself, by this means, with the prospect of absolutely expelling from Sicily the Carthaginians, who had long entertained the design of annexing this island to their empire, and had made considerable progress in that design.

By the joint forces of the Romans and Syracusans, Agrigentum, one of the principal cities then possessed by the Carthaginians, was taken, after a long siege. The Romans, encouraged by this success, and conscious of the great advantage which the enemy derived from their marine, began to think of equipping a fleet to cope with them at sea, as well as on land. A Carthaginian galley, stranded on the coast of Italy, is said to have served them as a model; and, by a wonderful effort of industry, they equipped in a few weeks a hundred similar to it, with five banks of oars—and twenty of a smaller size with three banks. The consul Dicilius made an improvement on these ships of war, by the invention of a machine called *Corbus*—a sort of crane, which, falling down and fastening upon the ships of the enemy, brought them to a close engagement, and served at the same time as a bridge or gangway for boarding them. All new inventions are usually successful

at first, from the surprise which they occasion. The Roman fleet gained a most complete victory over that of the Carthaginians. A vast number of their ships were destroyed, above 7000 men killed, and an equal number made prisoners.\*

For a few years the success of the Romans was uninterrupted. They took from the Carthaginians the islands of Corsica and Sardinia; and in the naval engagement at Ecnomus, having captured sixty of the enemy's ships, they now thought themselves in a situation to attempt the invasion of Africa.

The consul Attilus Regulus had the command of that expedition. The history of this illustrious man, particularly the latter part of it, is, by some modern writers, suspected of being fabulous; and indeed they have advanced some very plausible arguments against the belief of its authenticity: yet it is found in the best of the Roman writers, and is in itself so beautiful, that we cannot hastily resolve to refuse it credit. Regulus, after several successful engagements in Africa, had advanced even to the gates of Carthage; and such was the general consternation, that the city proposed to capitulate. It had been glorious for Regulus thus to have terminated the war by an advantageous and honourable peace; but, blinded by success, the terms he insisted on were so severe, that, even situated as they were, the Carthaginians rejected

\* This naval engagement was fought on the coast of Sicily, near Mylæ, now Milazzo. A monument of the victory was erected at Rome, which subsists to this day—the *columna rostrata*, dug up about 200 years ago, and now standing in the Capitol.

them. In the mean time, a large body of Greek troops arrived to their assistance. This changed the fortune of the war; the Carthaginians assumed new courage, and, with an army largely reinforced, attacking the Romans, they gained an important victory, and made Regulus their prisoner.

The Romans, undismayed by this great misfortune, prosecuted the war with fresh vigour. Metellus, in Sicily, was carrying every thing before him. He defeated Asdrubal, the Carthaginian general, in a signal engagement near Panormus; and Carthage, dispirited by her losses, began seriously to wish for peace. Ambassadors for that purpose were despatched to Rome; and Regulus was sent along with them, as it was not doubted that the negotiation, seconded by the endeavours of this general, whom his country most deservedly respected, would be easily terminated. They exacted at the same time from him an oath, that he would return to Carthage, in case there should neither be peace nor an exchange of prisoners. To the surprise of all, this great and generous man used his utmost endeavour to dissuade his countrymen from agreeing to a peace; a proposition which he represented as proceeding solely from the weakness of the enemy, whom, by continuing the war, they would compel to any submission. But still further, he even dissuaded his countrymen from consenting to an exchange of prisoners; a measure which he endeavoured to convince them must be to their disadvantage, from this circumstance, that they had in their hands many of the best officers of the enemy, whom they would be obliged to exchange against private

men. His arguments prevailed, and the negotiation was broken off.

Of the conduct of Regulus, and of the nature of the obligation which bound him, there have been various opinions, both among the ancients and moderns. Cicero argues the matter at great length in the third book of his "Offices."\* He applauds the conduct of Regulus, not only in the strict observance of his oath, but in his dissuasive against the exchange of prisoners. On the other hand, Sir Walter Raleigh, in his excellent "History of the World," has distinguished between these two actions. He applauds the conduct of Regulus in strictly maintaining the obligation of his oath, and in opposing the treaty of peace with the enemy; but his dissuading his countrymen from agreeing to an exchange of prisoners, he censures as a piece of ostentatious stoicism, and even inhumanity, which no good reason of state could justify. And this we must think a sound opinion. The latter part of the conduct of this illustrious man must on all hands meet with admiration. The pontifex Maximus, on being consulted on the validity of the oath he had sworn to return to Carthage, gave it as his opinion that, it having been extorted by the necessity of his situation, he was under no obligation to observe it; but the noble soul of Regulus could not admit of such evasion. Disregarding the entreaties of his friends, the tears of his wife and children, the urgent remonstrance of the senate and of the whole Roman people, this generous and heroic man resolved that the terror of no

\* Cic. de Offic. l. iii. c. xxvi. et. seq.

consequence, how dreadfulsoever, should persuade him to a violation of his honour.\* "I am not ignorant," said he, "that death and the severest tortures are preparing for me; but what are these to the stain of an infamous action, the reproach of a guilty mind? I have sworn to return to Carthage: it is therefore my duty to go. Let the gods direct the consequence as to their wisdom shall seem best." To Carthage accordingly he returned, where, as he had foreseen, he suffered a cruel and ignominious death.†

\* This scene is beautifully described by Horace, Od. iii. 5. 49.

† Most of the ancient writers concur in the assertion that Regulus was put to death in a very barbarous manner by the Carthaginians. The authors of the "Ancient Universal History" relate, as the most common opinion, that he was first exposed to a burning sun, with his eyelids cut off, and afterwards shut up in a cask, stuck around with sharp nails, in which he was suffered to die of hunger and want of sleep.—*Anc. Un. Hist.* vol. xii. p. 191. It must, however, be owned, that great doubt hangs over all the accounts that are given of the inhuman treatment of Regulus. Polybius, who is extremely minute in every thing relative to the history of this illustrious man, is entirely silent as to his fate; which, had it been such as is commonly related, he could never have omitted to mention. He assures us, in the first book of his history, that he has been most particular in his account of Regulus, that others may derive improvement from his example in not trusting too much to a course of prosperous fortune. As, therefore, the calamitous death of Regulus was the strongest exemplification of this moral lesson, it is impossible to believe that he would have studiously avoided the mention of the above particulars, if they had been true.

But there is in reality a positive testimony against the truth of those atrocious circumstances above related. Among various fragments of ancient authors, collected by the em-



The war in the mean time continued. Lilybœum, one of the strongest places belonging to the Carthaginians in Sicily, after a siege of many years by the Romans, with the aid of the Syracusans, and the most signal efforts on both sides, of courage, skill, and perseverance, was taken in the tenth year by blockade. After some alternate successes at sea, the Romans were victorious in two naval engagements: in the last of which, the consul Lutatius defeated Hamilcar Barcas, the father of the great Hannibal, and compelled the Carthaginians to sue for peace, which was not granted them but on the hardest conditions. These were, that they should abandon all their possessions in Sicily; that, in the space of twenty years, they should pay to the Romans 2200 talents of silver—about 325,480*l.* sterling; that they should restore, without ransom, all their prisoners; and, lastly, that they should not make war against Hiero, the king of Syracuse, or any of his allies. The Roman people refused

peror Constantine Porphyrogenitus, is a passage from Diodorus Siculus, in which it is asserted that the death of Regulus was owing to neglect; probably the carelessness of his keepers in omitting to supply him with food. The author adds, that the widow of Regulus instigated her sons, in revenge of their father's death, to wreak their resentment against two of the Carthaginian prisoners who had fallen into their hands, one of whom they actually starved to death. The other was fortunate enough to convey intelligence to the Roman magistrate of his comrade's death and his own intended fate, in consequence of which the Attilii very narrowly escaped a capital punishment. See "Toland's Works," vol. ii., p. 42, where there is a translation of the fragment of Diodorus and a proof of its authenticity.

to ratify this treaty, unless on the further conditions, that they should have an additional thousand talents for the expenses of the war; that the whole sum should be paid in ten years instead of twenty; and that the Carthaginians should yield up all the small islands which they possessed upon the coast of Italy. Sicily was declared a Roman province, with the exception of the kingdom of Syracuse. A prætor and quæstor were sent thither yearly, the former as a civil judge, the latter to collect the revenues.

Thus the Romans, after a war of twenty-four years, begun under every disadvantage, destitute of finances, totally unprovided with a fleet, and, of course, ignorant of navigation, were at length able to prescribe the most humiliating terms to Carthage, the first maritime power in the world.

At the end of the first Punic war, the temple of Janus was shut—an event which had not happened since the reign of Numa, that is, near 500 years. In a few years it was again opened, and never shut till the reign of Augustus.

The treaty with the Carthaginians was of no long duration. It was of too humbling a nature to the pride of this mighty power, to subsist longer than absolute necessity compelled: an useful lesson of moderation to a victorious people. No sooner had a little time allowed the vanquished state to repair her losses, than the war broke out again, with redoubled animosity. The Carthaginians began hostilities by the siege of Saguntum, a city of Spain, then in alliance with the Romans. The siege was conducted by Hannibal, then a very

young man, but who, from his infancy, had been inured to arms, and had all the qualities of a great general. His character has been drawn by Livy with the pencil of a master:—"Hannibal, being sent into Spain, on his arrival drew the eyes of the whole army upon him. The old soldiers believed that Hamilcar was again restored to life, and that they saw once more the same look of decision, the same fire of the eye, the very countenance and lineaments of their leader. Speedily, there was no need of such recollections of the father to endear to them the son. None ever showed a happier aptitude of disposition, whether in obeying or commanding; so that it was impossible to say whether he was most prized by the general or by the army. Nor, in whatever service of difficulty or of danger, would Asdrubal appoint any other to the command, or the troops engage under any other with equal confidence and courage. His boldness in undertaking a perilous enterprise was equalled by his prudence in conducting it. His strength, neither of body nor mind, was ever seen to yield to the severest labour. Insensible alike to heat or cold, his food and drink were limited to the necessities of nature, never indulged to gratification. All hours of the day or night were to him alike, whether for duty or repose; what could be spared from the former was given to the latter; no appliances were wanted—no soft couch, or silent retirement. Often was he seen, amidst the bustle of a military post, snatching a brief repose on the bare ground, his cloak his only covering. He affected no superiority of dress; valuing himself only on his arms and on his horses;

himself the hardest foot-soldier, and the most gallant horseman, the first to rush into combat, the last to quit the field. Yet were these high qualities counteracted by enormous vices, by the most inhuman cruelty, by worse than Punic perfidy, by the utter disregard of truth and of every thing sacred—owning no fear of Heaven, and regardless alike of promises and oaths.”

Saguntum was taken by Hannibal, after a siege of seven months, in which the inhabitants had endured the utmost miseries attendant on war. Faithful to their alliance with the Romans, this brave people defended themselves to the last extremity; and when at length convinced that their resistance was ineffectual, they set fire to the city, and the whole of them either perished in the flames, or were cut to pieces by the Carthaginians.

The military strength of the Romans was, at this time, very considerable. They had six legions in the field, amounting to 24,000 foot, and 18,000 horse: they had, besides, from the auxiliary states of Italy, an army of 48,000; men and their marine consisted of 240 ships of war.

The forces of the Carthaginians were commanded in chief by Hannibal; and this intrepid man now formed the daring project of carrying the war at once into the heart of Italy. He procured the minutest information as to every difficulty he would have to encounter, and took the most judicious care to provide against all obstacles. He gained, by kindness and by presents, a number of the Gauls to his interest, and thus smoothed his way through a country hostilely disposed, but not daring to attempt an effectual opposition. The

passage of the Ebro, and the defiles of the Pyrenees, were small obstacles to those his resolution and intrepidity surmounted. On the first intelligence of the march of the Carthaginians, Publius Scipio, the consul, had taken the field with a large army, and hoped by rapid marches to arrest him in the first part of his progress, and to make the country of the Transalpine Gauls the theatre of the war; but Hannibal had got the start of him, and had already passed the Rhone in the face of an opposing army. He took his way along the eastern banks of that river to Lyons, and thence to one of the chief passes of the Alps—not improbably that which is now known by the name of the Great St. Bernard. On proceeding to ascend the mountains, he found the country in some parts buried in snow, and at every defile defended by large troops of mountaineers. He overcame, by astonishing perseverance, every difficulty, and at length, in the space of fifteen days, penetrated into that country which he had promised to his troops as the end and the reward of their labours. The time occupied in the whole of this march was five months and a half. His army on leaving Carthage amounted to 50,000 foot and 20,000 horse; but of these, on arriving in Italy, there remained only 20,000 foot and 6000 horse. This expedition, of which Polybius and Livy have each given a detailed narration, (differing in a few minute particulars,) is deservedly reckoned one of the most remarkable exploits of antiquity.\*

\* The route of Hannibal across the Alps is not described by the ancient writers with such accuracy as to give any certainty of its precise direction.

In the first battle with the Carthaginians in Italy, the Romans were defeated. The consul Scipio was wounded, and must have fallen into the hands of the enemy, but for the bravery of his son, the younger Scipio, then a youth of fifteen years of age, afterwards known by the glorious surname of Africanus. The Romans lost another battle near the river Trebia in the neighbourhood of Placentia. They received a still more signal overthrow near the lake Thrasymenus, where the consul Flaminius was killed, and his army cut to pieces. The Roman historians themselves allow that Hannibal, amidst these successes, behaved with a moderation which added lustre to his victories. If his clemency was affected, his prudence at least was admirable. The prisoners belonging to the allied states he dismissed without ransom, and endeavoured to make them regard him as their deliverer from the oppression they suffered under the yoke of the Romans.

A misunderstanding that prevailed between the two new consuls, Varro and Emilius, was the immediate cause of that fatal defeat which the Romans sustained at Cannæ in Apulia, and which brought the republic to the very brink of destruction. The consuls took the chief command alternately, each for a day; an unwise arrangement, which demanded the most perfect consonance of designs and of tempers. It was the turn of Varro, who, eager to signalize himself, was imprudent enough to attack the army of Hannibal, then admirably posted, and which had every advantage both of disposition and situation. The manœuvres of the Carthaginian general in the battle of

Cannæ showed the most profound knowledge in the military art. I shall not here enter into a particular detail of them; but when I come to treat of the system of war among the ancients, I shall select as an example this great battle, and shall endeavour to give some idea of that very simple and admirable manœuvre planned by Hannibal in the heat of the engagement, to which the Carthaginians owed their success. The Roman army was entirely cut to pieces. Forty thousand were left dead upon the field of battle, among whom was the consul Emilius, and almost the whole body of the Roman knights. Varro, the other consul, followed by a few horse, fled precipitately to Venusia.

The Romans, amidst the consternation from so great a disaster, displayed a magnanimity truly heroic. The senate, on the first report of the fate of their army, ordered the gates of the city to be shut, lest the exaggerated intelligence of those who fled from the fight should add to the general alarm. The women were forbid to stir out of their houses, lest their cries and lamentations should dispirit those who had their country to defend; and the senators exerted themselves in every quarter to dispel the fears of the people.

Varro, from the wreck of the army, was able to collect 10,000 men; with these he repaired to Rome to defend the city, in case Hannibal, as was expected, should immediately attack it. This measure was undoubtedly his wisest policy, and he was strongly urged to it by Maherbal, one of his ablest officers. It appeared, however, to Hannibal, a doubtful enterprise; and while he delibe-

rated, the opportunity was lost. Varro, whose temerity was the cause of this great disaster, on approaching Rome with the shattered remains of the army whom he had with much pains collected, was met by the senate and received their solemn thanks, *because he had not despaired of the republic.\**

The effect of this spirited conduct was wonderful. The citizens thronged to carry their money to the public treasury. All above the age of seventeen, of whatever rank, enrolled themselves, and formed an army of four legions and of 10,000 horse. Eight thousand of the slaves voluntarily offered their services, and with the consent of their masters were embodied and armed. The allied states likewise furnished troops in proportion to their abilities.

The success of Hannibal was variously judged of at Carthage. The most sanguine, and the most short-sighted, concluded that Rome was now annihilated, *et quod actum erat republica Romana*. The wiser part reasoned far otherwise. They had heard of the conduct of the city subsequent to that great disaster, and they judged that while that

\* Varro, however unfortunate in this affair, and justly censurable for his temerity, was both a brave and a modest man. His countrymen were so sensible of his virtues and abilities, that they proposed in this emergency to create him dictator; but he refused that high situation. "*Confregit rempublicam Terentius Varro, Cannensis pugnae temerario ingressu; idem delatam sibi ab universo senatu et populo dictaturam recipere non sustinendo, pudore culpam maximæ cladis redemit; efficitque ut clades deorum iræ, modestia ipsius moribus imputaretur.*"—VALER. *Max.* lib. iv. c. 5.



spirit existed, there was much yet which remained for them to conquer. But even the most sagacious could not have foreseen that Hannibal was to ruin himself by his own imprudence. Capua, the metropolis of Campania, had opened her gates to the victor; the winter furnished a pretext to his troops to desire some respite from their fatigues; and he yielded to the blandishments of ease, and to the seduction of luxury. While his army indulged in all the variety of pleasures, they believed they had now attained the end and the reward of their toils; daily desertions weakened their numbers; and the Romans soon recovered the superiority they had lost.

The proconsul Sempronius Gracchus, at the head of an army composed chiefly of slaves, defeated 18,000 Carthaginians at Beneventum. With permission of the senate, he had promised all of them their liberty if they proved victorious, and this prospect gave them the courage of heroes. Philip II., king of Macedon, having made an alliance with Hannibal, landed in Italy, and laid siege to Apollonia, but being surprised in his camp by the pro-prætor Lævinus, and utterly defeated, with difficulty secured his retreat to his own dominions.

The republic owed much to the military skill and prudence of the consul Fabius, justly sur-named Maximus, who found the true secret of weakening the Carthaginians and wearing out the spirits of their leaders, by avoiding a general engagement. An army at a distance from the source of its supplies, and in a hostile country, must act with unremitting vigour—or perish. The Syra-

cusans having broken their alliance with Rome, and taken part with the Carthaginians, Marcellus, who, previous to the disaster of Cannæ, had defeated Hannibal before Nola, in Campania, being at this time pro-consul in Sicily, formed the design of besieging Syracuse. This, however, was found a more difficult enterprise than had been expected. The genius of a single man was found sufficient to withstand for a great length of time the utmost efforts of an enemy by sea and land. This extraordinary man was Archimedes. It is pity that the ancient authors who have minutely detailed the prodigious effects of those machines which he constructed, and so successfully employed in this remarkable siege, have given accounts so obscure and imperfect of their construction. The city was twenty-two miles in compass, and was completely defended at every point, both on the quarter of the land and sea. The Roman fleet consisted of sixty galleys of five banks of oars, and an immense number of smaller vessels. These were manned with archers, slingers, and engineers, who worked the *balistæ* and *catapulta* erected on their decks. Marcellus caused eight galleys to be joined together laterally by iron chains, and on their surface, as a foundation, an immense tower was erected, whose height overtopped the walls of the city. This huge machine, which Marcellus called his *Sambuca*, or Dulcimer, was slowly advancing, rowed by a great number of men, when Archimedes discharged from one of his engines a stone of 1250 pounds weight, then a second, and immediately afterwards a third, with a direction so sure as to batter the galleys and the tower to pieces

in a few minutes. An immense artillery of darts, stones, burning torches, and every material of annoyance, was incessantly launched upon the besiegers from every quarter of the walls; while the machines from which they issued were altogether beyond their reach, and even out of their sight. It was of no avail whether they made their attack from a distance or close to the walls. If within the shot of a bow, the engines of Archimedes assailed the galleys with stones of such weight as entirely to demolish them; if they approached the walls, they were seized by cranes and grappling irons, suspended in the air, and suddenly let fall with a force that sunk them. Taking the advantage of a meridian sun, and concentrating the rays by a combination of polished plates of metal, this wonderful engineer burnt the vessels of the enemy at a furlong's distance;\* thus, in the words of an

\* Some of the moderns have questioned the authenticity of the accounts given by ancient writers of the wonderful machines of Archimedes, and particularly of that apparatus of mirrors by which it is said he burnt the enemy's ships (see Descartes, *Dioptric. Disc. viii.*, Fontenelle, *Œuvres*, &c.;) but the more general opinion of men of science is in favour of their credibility. M. de Buffon constructed a burning-glass composed of 168 plain mirrors, which set fire to wood at the distance of 209 feet, and melted lead at the distance of 120. Leibnitz did justice to this great genius among the ancients, when he said "*Qui Archimedes intellegit, recentiorum summorum virorum inventa parcius mirabitur;*" and Dr. Wallis, speaking of Archimedes, terms him, "*Vir stupendæ sagacitatis, qui prima fundamenta posuit inventionum ferè omnium, de quibus promovendis ætas nostra gloriatur.*" See "*Duten's Inquiry into the Discoveries of the Moderns,*" part iii. ch. 10, 12.

old writer, making even the fire of heaven obedient to his commands.\* Such, says Plutarch, became at length the terror of the Roman soldiers at this almost supernatural warfare, that if any man saw the smallest piece of cord or wood making its appearance above the walls, he instantly took to flight, crying out to his companions that they were to be overwhelmed in a moment by some tremendous power.

But the perseverance of the Romans prevailed at length over the valour of the Syracusans and the genius of Archimedes. In the third year of the siege the city was carried by surprise. Marcellus took advantage of a great festival which the Syracusans celebrated in honour of Diana, and in the dead of night, while the sentinels were sunk in sleep after a deep debauch, scaling the walls at the same moment in several different quarters, the Romans were in possession of a great part of the town before the Syracusans were aware of their danger. Marcellus wished to save this great and splendid city from destruction, and sent proposals to the garrison of the citadel for a surrender on terms sufficiently moderate and humane. But these were not immediately embraced, as the garrison expected a relief; and the Roman general, apprehensive of that issue, was reluctantly compelled to use the rights of a conqueror, and abandon the city to the plunder of the soldiery. Still, however, his clemency was conspicuous, for he left the gates open for the escape of all who chose to save their lives by flight. It had been happy if Archimedes had availed himself of this permission;

\* Eustath. ad Iliad. E.

but the philosopher was busy in his closet with a geometrical demonstration, when a soldier, plundering his house, killed him on the spot. Marcellus erected a monument to his memory, and took a humane and generous charge of all his kindred.

The kingdom of Syracuse was now added to the Roman province in Sicily, which already comprehended the greater part of that island.

While the war in Italy against the troops of Hannibal was in the mean time successfully spun out to their destruction, by the great Fabius, the younger Scipio, who had succeeded his father as pro-consul in Spain, accomplished the reduction of that peninsula. The taking of Carthagera (*Carthago nova*) was a fatal blow to the enemy. It was the most opulent of their foreign ports, and the Romans found there, besides great treasures, an immense magazine of military stores, which had been lodged there as in a depôt, for the conquest of Italy.

Meantime Asdrubal had passed the Alps, with a powerful army, to the assistance of his brother Hannibal. But the consul, Claudius Nero, coming upon him by surprise in a disadvantageous situation, into which he had been led by the treachery of his guides, engaged and entirely defeated him. Asdrubal was killed in battle, and Claudius, marching to meet Hannibal, gave him the first intelligence of the defeat by throwing his brother's head into his camp. This Carthaginian officer, though thus unfortunate, had a very high character as a general. Had Asdrubal been successful in this engagement, and effected a junction with his brother, it is extremely probable that everything

must have given way before them in Italy. But the defeat of that great army and the death of their leader, threw the gloom of despondency on all the prospects of Hannibal, and gave new life and courage to the Romans.

Scipio, triumphant in Spain, now passed into Africa, and carried havoc and devastation even to the gates of Carthage. Alarmed for the fate of their empire, the Carthaginians recalled Hannibal from Italy, where of late he had made no progress. The battle of Zama, in Africa, decided the fate of the war. Twenty thousand Carthaginians were slain in the field, and an equal number taken prisoners. The loss of the Romans did not exceed two thousand. Hannibal himself with difficulty escaped from the field, and, arriving at Carthage, represented affairs in so desperate a point of view, that it was immediately resolved to sue for peace. It was granted by Scipio on these conditions:—that the Carthaginians should abandon Spain and Sicily, together with all the islands lying between Italy and Africa; that they should make restitution of all prisoners and deserters, give up all their ships, except ten galleys, and pay, within the term of fifty years, ten thousand talents; and, lastly, that they should undertake no war without consent of the Romans. Such was the conclusion of the second Punic war, ended thus gloriously for Rome, and most honourably for Publius Scipio, to whom his country decreed a splendid triumph, distinguishing him ever afterwards by the surname of Africanus.

Everything now concurred to swell the pride of the Romans and to extend their power. A vast

increase of wealth had flowed into Rome from the late conquests. Their recent continued victories, and the plunder they derived from them, inflamed their appetite for fresh acquisitions. It was no longer that petty nation occupying a part of Italy, whom we have seen for centuries waging an insignificant war with the tribes which surrounded them; it was a people which began to aspire at the sovereignty of the world.

In this disposition it was not surprising that they should eagerly embrace every opportunity which offered of extending their conquests. We have seen, in treating of the last period of the Grecian history, that Philip II. of Macedon harassed the Greek states with frequent attacks upon their territories. They complained to the Romans, who immediately declared war against the Macedonian. Philip was defeated, and was glad to purchase a peace by paying a thousand talents, and giving his son Demetrius as a hostage.

The kingdom of Syria was, at this time, the most powerful branch of the empire of Alexander; but, ruined in its domestic policy by the foolish wars of the princes of the family of Seleucus, it was in a state of disorder and anarchy. Antiochus, the prince on the throne, had provoked the indignation of the Romans by opposing their arms in Greece, and giving an asylum to Hannibal, then an exile from Carthage. Antiochus was defeated near Thermopylæ, and pursued by the two Scipios into his own kingdom of Syria, where, after various losses, he was reduced to the necessity of concluding a peace on the most humiliating terms. He agreed to pay fifteen thousand talents

as the expenses of the war, to abandon all his possessions in Europe, and to cede to the Romans the whole of Asia to the west of Taurus, that is, the whole country from the borders of Mesopotamia and Armenia to the Ægean Sea. The Romans, with much meanness, demanded as another condition, that Antiochus should give up Hannibal into their hands; but the Carthaginian had made his escape on the first intelligence that a treaty was in agitation. The younger Scipio (Lucius) was honoured on this occasion with the surname of Asiaticus, as his elder brother Publius had gained that of Africanus.

These Asiatic conquests were, in a moral point of view, much more prejudicial than advantageous to the Romans. Their simple and austere manners began gradually to relax, and they acquired a relish for luxurious enjoyments. This change in the manners of his countrymen roused the virtuous indignation of Cato the censor, the determined enemy of every species of luxury and corruption. At the time when Hannibal was ravaging Italy, and when the Roman state had the strongest motive to retrench all superfluous expenses, a sumptuary statute called the Oppian law was passed, which prohibited the women from the use of gold in their ornaments, unless the quantity of half an ounce, and from wearing garments of different colours, and likewise interdicted the use of chariots. At the end of the second Punic war the Roman ladies used all their influence to have this law repealed, urging that the motive for its enactment no longer existed. So earnest were they in their purpose, that, for-



getting that modest reserve which is their sex's highest ornament, they rushed out into the streets, and, besetting every avenue to the forum, laid hold of the men as they passed, and endeavoured, both by clamour and by blandishments, to engage their votes for the abrogation of this odious statute. It was no wonder that the rigid virtue of old Cato, then consul, was inflamed with indignation at this spectacle. He poured forth an animated oration on the occasion; but in a tone of keen irony which the greater part of his auditors judged too severe; for the obnoxious law was repealed by a majority of suffrages.

Much more justifiable on this occasion was the severity of Cato than on another which occurred soon after. He incited two of the tribunes, the Petittii, to bring a formal accusation against Scipio Africanus, as guilty of peculation in converting large sums gained in his foreign conquests to his own instead of the public use. The behaviour of Scipio, on this occasion, was consonant to the magnanimity of his character. On the first day of his citation before the assembly of the people, when his accusation was read, appearing not to have listened to it, he entered into an ample detail of all the illustrious services he had rendered his country. His accusers made no reply, not daring to controvert a single word which he had uttered; but contented themselves with adjourning the assembly to the next day. On the morrow, while an immense multitude crowded the forum, Scipio pressed forward to the tribunal, and, making a signal for silence, "My countrymen," said he, "it was on this very day that I fought bravely for

you against Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the field of Zama, and gained a glorious victory. Is it thus you celebrate that anniversary? Come, let us repair instantly to the Capitol, and give our solemn thanks to all the gods for the republic preserved through my means." With one universal acclamation, the whole multitude followed him, while he led the way to the temple of Jupiter—and the tribunes were left alone in the forum. They persisted, however, in appointing a third day for the trial; but Scipio paid no regard to the summons, and the tribunes themselves, either ashamed of their conduct or convinced that the trial must terminate to their own disadvantage and an increase of honour to the accused, thought proper to drop the prosecution. The illustrious Africanus died soon after, in peaceful retirement, at his country-seat of Linternum.

There is, perhaps, no stronger testimony to the simplicity and integrity of this great man than what is recorded of him by Cicero, that when in the country, and free from the cares of public life, he could amuse himself even with the pastimes of children. In the second book, "*De Oratore*," is this beautiful passage: "I have been often told," says Crassus, "by my father-in-law, that his kinsmen, Lælius and the great Scipio, were frequently wont to fly from the bustle of the town to a quiet retreat in the country, and there to employ themselves in sports that were childish to a degree beyond all belief. Nay, though I should hardly venture to tell it of such men, yet Scævola assured me, that when they were at Cageta and on the banks of the Lucrine, they were wont to pass their time in

gathering shells and pebbles on the shore, and in every sort of frolic and amusement, just as the little birds fly about in wanton circles when they have finished the task of building their nests and providing for their young."\* Why should Cicero feel ashamed, or apologize for mentioning this anecdote, which in reality does so much honour to the persons of whom it is recorded? No force of words, no pompous eulogium, could convey to us so just an idea, so convincing a proof, of the virtuous simplicity of those men, or the probity of their minds, as this beautiful picture. The man who feels the stings of an evil conscience, whose soul is a prey to the turbulent passions of avarice or criminal ambition, can never thus taste pleasure in the sports of innocence. He will seek to drown the reflections of his mind in violent gratifications, and in the intoxication of sensual enjoyments. Seneca has added his testimony to the virtues of the great Scipio, in these words: "I write this letter from Linternum, the villa of Scipio Africanus; I reverence his shade, and pay my veneration to that little altar which I have erected to his memory

\* Sæpe ex socero meo audiui, cum is diceret, socerum suum Lælium semper ferè cum Scipione solitum rusticari; eosque incredibiliter repuerascere esse solitos, cum rus ex urbe tanquam ex vinculis evolavissent. Non audeo dicere de talibus viris, sed tamen ita solet narrare Scævola, conchas eos et umbilicos ad Cajetam et ad Lucrinum legere consuesse, et ad omnem animi remissionem ludumque descendere. Sic enim se res habet; ut quemadmodum volucres videmus procreationis atque utilitatis suæ causa fingere et construere nidos; easdem autem, cum aliquid effecerint, lævandi laboris sui causa, passim ac liberè solutas opere volitare: &c.—CIC. *de Oratore*, lib. ii. c. 6.

on the very spot where, as I conjecture, he lies buried. His soul, I am confident has returned to that heaven from which it came."\*

The younger Scipio (Asiaticus) was soon after impeached for the same crime which had been matter of accusation against his brother. The tribunes, it seems, were determined to have at least one victim from that illustrious house of the Corneliî. He was condemned to pay a heavy fine, as is generally believed, upon false evidence; for when his whole property was seized, the amount disproved the calumnious accusation, and the senate decreed him a high recompense for the injury he had sustained.

In these instances, the zeal of Cato, though doubtless proceeding from a virtuous motive, was carried to a most blameable excess. The only apology that can be made for it is the shocking profligacy of manners of which his own times furnished a striking example in that society which was known by the name of the *Bacchanalian*. Under the pretence of a religious institution in honour of Bacchus, a vast number of both sexes, and of all ranks, associated themselves in a mysterious combination, bound to secrecy by tremendous oaths. They held their meetings at midnight, five times every month, and promiscuously indulged in every species of debauchery, and even in the commission of the most atrocious crimes: for the youth of either sex whom they trepanned to

\* In ipsa Scipionis Africani villa jacens, hæc scribo; adoratis ejus manibus et arâ, quam sepulchrum esse tanti viri suspicor. Animum quidem ejus in cœlum, ex quo erat, rediisse persuadeo mihi.—SENEC. *Epist.* 86.

their abominable purposes, if an unwilling victim, usually paid the forfeit of life. A freed woman, anxious for the safety of her lover, disclosed the mysteries to the consul, Postumius, and to him and to his colleague the senate committed full power to take every necessary measure for the detection and punishment of all concerned in this horrid association, both in Rome and in the other cities of Italy. The number was found to exceed seven thousand. Of these the most guilty were capitally punished; others betook themselves to voluntary banishment; and not a few, from conscious guilt and the terror of punishment, laid violent hands on themselves. The senate passed a solemn decree that henceforward no individual should presume to offer a sacrifice to Bacchus, at which more than five persons assisted, without a previous permission granted by their body in full assembly.\*

The attention of Rome was called off from her domestic concerns by the disorders of Macedonia. Perseus, the elder son of Philip II., had poisoned the ear of his father by false accusations of his younger brother Demetrius, who had successfully negotiated a peace with the Romans, and whom he artfully represented as cherishing a design of dethroning his father and supplanting him in the sovereignty of Macedonia. Philip, then in his dotage, listened to these infamous surmises, and cruelly put to death Demetrius by poison. Tortured by remorse, he sunk into profound melancholy, and died a short time after. Among the

\* A very interesting account of these matters is given by Livy, lib. xxxix. c. 8, et seq.

first acts of the administration of Perseus was an alliance with several of the Grecian states to make war against the Romans. We have already, in treating of the Grecian history, seen the issue of this war in the total defeat of Perseus, who was brought captive to Rome to adorn the triumph of Paulus Æmilius, and in the reduction of Macedonia, which now became a province of the Roman empire.

A few years after this time began the third Punic war, which terminated in the destruction of Carthage. Massinissa, king of Numidia, who at the time of Scipio's great successes in Africa had become the ally of the Romans, was the cause of this war. The Numidians had seized some territories belonging to Carthage; and a war ensued, in which the Carthaginians were much weakened. The son of Massinissa, a barbarian in every sense, slaughtered in cold blood 58,000 of the Carthaginians after they had laid down their arms. The Romans with great meanness laid hold of that season of calamity to declare war, and their subsequent conduct was equally infamous and disgraceful. The Carthaginians, weakened and dispirited, conscious of their utter inability to withstand this formidable power, made the most humble submission, offering even to acknowledge themselves the subjects of Rome. The senate promised to show them every degree of favour, on condition that they should perform what the consuls required of them, and send three hundred hostages of high rank as a security of that obligation. With natural reluctance, but unsuspecting of treachery, they gave this great pledge, and sent

the hostages to Rome. A consular army immediately landed in Africa, and there required, in a solemn manner, that the Carthaginians should give up all their arms and military stores contained in their magazines. "You are now," said they, "under the protection of the Romans, and have no need of arms." In vain they urged, that they were surrounded by enemies, and needed them for their defence. All remonstrance was ineffectual, and they were obliged to submit. The most infernal treachery followed. Bereft of arms, the Carthaginians were in no condition to refuse whatever terms should be proposed. They sent deputies to the Roman camp, to know what had been the determination of the senate with regard to their fate. They were now informed by the consul, that it was finally resolved that they should abandon their city, which the senate had decreed should be razed to its foundations; but that they were to be allowed to build on any other part of their territory, provided it was at ten miles' distance from the sea. The amazement and affliction with which these orders were received, are not to be described. The deputies threw themselves upon the ground, shed tears like children, and endeavoured by every motive of compassion and argument of reason to prevail on the consul to depart from this inhuman resolution. But all was in vain. The deputies were ordered instantly to return to Carthage, and to intimate the final determination of the Romans, and the necessity for an immediate compliance.

Despair and frenzy seized the inhabitants of the city upon this fatal intelligence. They prepared

for a frantic exertion of resistance, unanimously resolved that death only should separate them from the temples and altars of their gods, the dwellings of their fathers, and the land of their nativity. Orders were immediately given to barricade the gates of the city: every hand was active in preparation for defence. Arms were formed from every material which could supply them; the women parted with their ornaments of precious metal, and even cut off their hair to form bow-strings. The temples and palaces of the city were turned into workhouses for the fabrication of military engines; the men worked night and day without intermission, the women bringing their victuals at stated hours, and assisting themselves in every labour to which their strength was equal. The Romans now found that they had to do with a people who would defend themselves to the last extremity.

Asdrubal, the nephew of Hannibal, whom the Carthaginians had imprisoned for insulting the Romans, was now called to take the chief command of the forces of his country; and in a desperate engagement he would have cut to pieces the Roman army, had it not been for a masterly stroke of Scipio Emilianus,\* who covered their retreat while they fled across the river. The merit of Scipio was so conspicuous on this occasion, that at Rome he was unanimously chosen consul, though he was but thirty-seven years of age, and the age required by law for that high office was forty-three. He was likewise invested

\* The son of Emilius Paulus, and, by adoption, the grandson of Scipio Africanus.



with the sole command of the African war; a charge which he soon fulfilled by reducing the Carthaginians to such extremity that they offered to submit to any conditions, provided only their city might be preserved. But this condition Scipio had it not in his power to grant. In a strong assault on one of the gates, he broke it down, and, entering with a large force, penetrated to the citadel, which held out a siege of several days, while the Romans were in possession of the town. At length it was surrendered. Scipio, unwilling to destroy this proud and splendid capital, sent to Rome for further orders. But these contained no mercy for Carthage. The city was set fire to in many different quarters. Pillage, carnage, and desolation ensued. The conflagration lasted for seventeen days. At the recital of a scene of this kind, it is impossible to restrain our indignation, and not to execrate that barbarous policy which prescribes a conduct so contrary to every worthy feeling of the human mind. Thus ended the ill-fated Carthage, in the 607th year from the building of Rome, and the 146th before the Christian era.

The same year was remarkable for the destruction of Corinth, and the entire extinction of the liberties of Greece. It had for some time been the policy of the Romans to keep up divisions among the different states, and thus artfully to substitute themselves as umpires in their quarrels, or excite them to weaken and destroy each other. The Achaians, as we have seen, furnished the chief obstacle to the accomplishment of their design, and obliged them to resort to force in order

to reduce them to submission. Metellus, the prætor, began the war, which was terminated by Mummius, the consul, who took Corinth by storm and utterly destroyed it. Greece was immediately afterwards reduced to a Roman province, under the name of Achaia.

This was the era of the commencement of a taste for the fine arts at Rome, to which the knowledge of Asiatic luxuries had successfully paved the way. "How happy for mankind," says Abbé Millot, "could a nation be distinguished at once for its virtue and its refinement, and become polished and enlightened while it retained a purity of morals!" But this is a beautiful impossibility.

## BOOK THE FOURTH.

## CHAPTER I.

Sedition of the Gracchi—Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi—Criminal Ambition of Jugurtha—The Romans declare War against him, under Metellus and Marius—Death of Jugurtha—Invasion of the Cimbri—Progress of Corruption in the Republic—Livius Drusus's Projects of Reform—The Social War—Origin of the Civil War—Rivalship of Marius and Sylla—War with Mithridates—Marius and Cinna—Sylla obtains absolute Authority—His Proscriptions—His salutary Reforms—He resigns the Dictatorship—Lepidus defeated and slain—Pompey distinguishes himself—Lucullus's War against Mithridates—He is superseded by Pompey—Conspiracy of Catiline—Extent of the Design—Punishment of the Conspirators—Catiline is killed in Battle—Ambitious Designs of Julius Cæsar—First Triumvirate—Agrarian Law—Cæsar's increase of Power—His Design for the Removal of Cicero—Cicero's pusillanimous Conduct—He goes into Exile—His Estates confiscated—Cæsar's military Exploits in Gaul—Pompey procures the Recall of Cicero—Death of Crassus, and Rivalship of Pompey and Cæsar.

THE Romans, as we have seen, had now, within the period of a very few years, accomplished the total destruction of the Carthaginian empire, the most formidable rival of their power, and had

added to their own dominion Spain, Sicily, Macedonia, Greece, and a large portion of Asia. These immense conquests, while they aggrandized the Roman name and diffused the terror of their arms over a great part of the globe, introduced at home that corruption which is the consequence of wealth, and that luxury which consumes the patriotic spirit. Disorders now arose in the commonwealth, which undermined its constitution, and, ultimately, and even by rapid steps, accomplished its destruction.

At this period arose Tiberius and Caius Gracchus—two brothers, of plebeian blood by their father's side, but ennobled by civic honours—and, on their mother's side, by descent from the illustrious Scipio Africanus. Their mother, Cornelia, was wont to stimulate their ambition by this generous reproach: "Why, my sons, must I ever be called the daughter of Scipio, rather than the mother of the Gracchi?" Tiberius, the elder, had borne the charge of quæstor in Spain; and, being called to account with great severity by the senate, upon his return, he conceived a high animosity against that body, and a strong predilection in favour of the popular interest in the state. On that side, he conceived, lay his path of ambition; and the corruptions in the highest order, from their overgrown fortunes, contrasted with the indigence and hardships of the lower class, afforded a plausible, and, in some measure, a just pretence for a corrective of that inequality.

Tiberius possessed every accomplishment for a popular leader—a bold and intrepid mind, inflex-

ible perseverance, and a nervous and copious elocution. An enthusiast by nature, it is not improbable, however warped by prejudice, that he had actually persuaded himself that his views were virtuous and patriotic. Being elected a tribune of the people, his first measure was to propose the revival of an ancient statute, the Licinian law, which prohibited any Roman citizen from possessing above five hundred jugera, or about two hundred and sixty acres of land. To conciliate the rich to this restitution, the superfluous land in their possession was to be paid for, at a just price, from the treasury of the state, and distributed in certain proportions to the poor. The patricians, as might have been expected, opposed this measure with keen and indignant zeal; and, according to their customary policy, gained over to their side Octavius, one of the tribunes, and by this means secured a *veto*. The proposition would otherwise have been carried by a great majority in the assembly of the tribes. Tiberius, enraged at this disappointment, now adopted a measure equally violent and unconstitutional. The *veto* of the tribunes, which was the surest guard of the popular interest, had ever been respected as a sacred authority. Tiberius was resolved to render it vain and nugatory. He immediately proposed that Octavius should be deprived of his tribuneship. It was in vain that every sound patriot saw the illegality of this proposal, and remonstrated against it as fatal to the constitution. Octavius was deposed by a majority of suffrages, and the revival of the Licinian law was carried with a triumphant hand.

Stimulated by this first success, the zeal of Tiberius now meditated another blow against the aristocracy. He procured a law to be passed, which decreed that the treasures bequeathed to the republic by Attalus, king of Pergamus, and which the senate had hitherto administered for state purposes, should be fairly accounted for and distributed among the poorer citizens; and, as the term of his own tribunate was about to expire, he solicited to be continued in the office for another year, that he might bring to a conclusion his important plan of reform.

Even the populace themselves, who had hitherto supported him, were aware of the illegality of this measure, which tended directly to establish an arbitrary authority in the state, without limitation of period. On the day of election the assembly was ill attended, and the first tribes which were called to vote gave their suffrage against Tiberius. His friends adjourned the assembly till next day; and in the interval Tiberius with his children walked the streets in mourning, requesting protection from the people against the designs of the patricians, who, as he said, threatened his life. On the following day a tumult arose in the assembly of the people, between the opposite parties. The senators broke up their meeting, and repaired in a body to the forum, followed by an immense crowd of the young patricians armed with clubs and staves. Tiberius, apprehensive of his danger, endeavoured to escape with precipitation, his friends following his example; but falling down in the throng, he was assailed by many hands, and slain upon the spot.

About three hundred of his followers met with the same fate, and their dead bodies were flung into the Tyber.

Whether the views of Tiberius Gracchus were truly disinterested, and the result of real though misguided patriotism, or whether a criminal ambition was their motive, as his opponents strongly reported, is a question which cannot be with certainty resolved. A strong presumption against him arises from this circumstance, that his brother-in-law, Scipio Æmilianus, and his cousin, Scipio Nasica, who was actually instrumental in his death, were of the latter opinion. Scipio Æmilianus, a man of strict virtue and enlightened patriotism, exerted all his powers to quell those dissensions between the senate and people, which he saw the carrying the Licinian law into execution would inevitably tend to exasperate, to the hazard of all civil order. The consequence of his generous endeavours was, that he was found dead in his bed.

Some years afterwards, Caius Gracchus, un-intimidated by his brother's fate, pursued the same steps which had brought him to destruction. Being elected tribune, he took every measure for a strict enforcement of the Licinian law, which had hitherto been executed with great remissness. He procured the revival of an obsolete statute, which prohibited the capital punishment of any citizen without the concurring sanction of the senate and people; and with the view of extending his popularity beyond the bounds of Rome, he proposed a law by which the right of citizenship should be conferred on all the inhabitants of the

Roman territories within the bounds of Italy; with an additional enactment, that whoever claimed the right of citizen, if cast by the censors, might appeal to the popular assembly.

These measures, as may be supposed, gave great disgust to the aristocracy, who, it is plain, were at this time the real supporters of the Roman constitution. But the measure which above every other tended to exasperate the senators against Caius, was an inquiry which he set on foot into the corruptions of their body, in which he so far prevailed, that a law was passed depriving that assembly of all concern in the administration of justice, and declaring that in future the civil judges should be exclusively chosen from the order of knights; an act which the senate justly regarded not only as a deep insult to their body, but as a fatal blow to the constitution of the state.

In the view of counteracting these most dangerous innovations, and of undermining the power of the demagogue, the party of the senate and patricians set up Livius Drusus, a young man of uncommon abilities, for whom they procured the office of tribune, and instructed him to supplant the influence of Caius by affecting a still more ardent zeal for the popular interest. They despatched Caius at the same time on a mission to Africa, to rebuild the city of Carthage. His absence diminished the number of his partisans and increased those of Livius. At his return, he thought to regain his ground by soliciting a renewed appointment to the tribunate, but was mortified by a rejection of his pretensions. Opimius, a man whom he knew to be his determined enemy,



was elected to the consulate, and every thing tended to convince him that his popularity was fast declining. It is said that his mother, Cornelia, warned him in passionate terms to escape, by a change of conduct, the fate of his elder brother; but he was deaf to her remonstrances. In a meeting of the Comitia, his partisans having come armed to the forum, a tumult ensued, in which one of them stabbed a lictor of the consul with his poniard; a most furious conflict followed, in which Caius Gracchus, together with about three thousand of the popular party, were massacred in the streets of Rome.

Such was the fate of the Gracchi, men endowed by nature with those talents which, properly directed, might have conduced to the happiness and aggrandizement of their country; but either the victims of a criminal ambition, or precipitated by an intemperance of democratic zeal into measures subversive of all civil order, they perished as the disturbers of the public peace.

There is no female character on whom the ancient writers have lavished more praise than on Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, of whose greatness of mind under the severest misfortunes they speak in terms of the highest eulogy. She had seen the funerals of twelve of her children, the last of whom were Tiberius and Caius Gracchus. While her friends were lamenting her misfortunes, "Call not me unfortunate," said she; "I shall never cease to think myself a happy woman, who have been the mother of the Gracchi."\* Impru-

\* "Cornelia duodecim partus totidem funeribus recog-

dent and dangerous for themselves as she must have thought the conduct of her sons, she most naturally deemed it the result of real virtue and patriotism. Plutarch informs us that she spent the remaining years of her life in a villa near Misenum, visited, respected, and beloved by the most eminent men, both Greeks and Romans, and honoured by interchanging presents even with foreign princes. Her conversation was delightful when she recounted anecdotes of her father Africanus; but all were astonished when she spoke freely of her sons, of their great deeds and their untimely fate, and this without ever shedding a tear. "It was thought by some," continues Plutarch, "that the pressure of age and misfortune had deadened her maternal feelings: but they," he adds, "who were of that weak opinion, were ignorant that a superior mind, enlightened by a liberal education, can rise above all the calamities of life; and that though fortune may sometimes oppress virtue, she cannot deprive her of that serenity and resolution which never forsake her in the day of adversity."

The universal corruption that now prevailed at Rome was in nothing more conspicuous than in a celebrated event which happened at this time. The old king Masinissa, whom we have mentioned as an ally of the Romans at the time of the

novit: et de cæteris facile est, quos nec editos nec amissos civitas sensit. Tiberium et Caium Gracchum, quos etiam qui bonos viros negaverit, magnos fatebitur, et occisos vidit et insepultos. Consolantibus tamen, miseramque dicentibus, nunquam, inquit, non felicem me dicam quæ Gracchos peperit."—SENEC. *Consol. ad Marc.*, c. 16.

first invasion of Africa by Scipio, left three sons, who jointly governed Numidia; till, by the death of his brothers, Micipsa remained sole master of the kingdom. This prince, though he had two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, adopted his nephew Jugurtha, a young man of promising talents, whose friendship he weakly thought to secure for his cousins by giving him an equal share with them of his dominions. No sooner was Micipsa dead, than this ungrateful youth resolved to attain an undivided empire by putting them to death. Hiempsal was his first victim; and Adherbal, dreading a similar fate, betook himself to Rome, to sue for justice and to entreat the aid and protection of the Romans, to whom his father had rendered his kingdom tributary. But the money of Jugurtha had been beforehand with him. He had bribed to his interest a sufficient party in the senate to procure a reference to ten commissioners, who were sent into Africa with plenary powers to decide between the contending parties. These, by similar policy, the traitor won to his interests, so that they declared him innocent of the charge, and decreed to him the sovereignty of one-half of Numidia. Jugurtha now pursued his schemes for the destruction of Adherbal, and, openly declaring war, besieged him in the town of Cirtha. The Romans sent their deputies to put a stop to such culpable proceedings; but these, like the former commissioners, were not proof against corruption. Adherbal was obliged to capitulate and throw himself on the mercy of Jugurtha, by whom he was immediately put to death.

These flagrant enormities, which called loud for

vengeance, continued yet to meet with shameful palliation in the Roman senate; but the Roman people were not bribed; and their cries for justice at length compelled the rulers of the republic to declare war against Jugurtha. In the interval of a truce, this traitor appeared in person at Rome, and had the confidence to justify his proceedings in full senate; where, as before, he had so lavishly bestowed his money as to insure his acquittal. A continuance, however, of the same conduct excited at length the utmost indignation of the Romans, and Metellus, the consul, was sent against him at the head of a large army.

Metellus chose for his lieutenant the celebrated Marius, a man of mean birth, who possessed great military talents and the utmost personal intrepidity, but with a total want of every generous and virtuous principle. Instigated by ambition, and bound by no ties of gratitude to the man who had raised him from obscurity, he sought leave to go to Rome, and there represented the conduct of Metellus in so unfavourable a point of view, and talked so plausibly of what he could himself have done in the same situation, that he gained the people to his interest, was elected to the consulate, and obtained the charge of prosecuting the war against Jugurtha. Metellus, though in the train of success, being thus superseded, returned to Rome, where a just sense of his services prevailed over every injurious impression, and he was decreed the honour of a triumph.

But Marius, with all his military abilities, was obliged to employ treachery to finish the Jugurthan war. The perfidious character of Jugurtha justi-

fied, as he thought, a similar policy in his enemy. Sylla, then acting as quæstor to Marius, seduced Bocchus, king of Mauritania, the father-in-law of Jugurtha, from his alliance; and that prince, to purchase peace with the Romans, delivered up Jugurtha into their hands. He was brought to Rome in chains, and, after gracing the triumph of Marius, was thrown into a dungeon and starved to death.

The Romans were at this time under a serious alarm from the barbarous nations, who, pouring down from the northern parts of Europe, suddenly made their appearance in a countless host, even upon the frontiers of Italy. This horde of savages, which was said to amount to more than 300,000 men in arms, attended with their women, children, and cattle, were known by the name of Cimbri; but there is no certainty of the precise country from which they migrated. The consul Papirius Carbo was despatched to Illyricum to oppose their progress, but with inadequate force; for they overwhelmed his army like a tempest. They fought in a dense and solid mass, of which the foremost ranks were chained together by their girdles. Had this torrent forced its way across the Rætian Alps into Italy, it is hard to say what might have been the fate of the Roman empire; but fortunately they chose a different course, and dissipated the alarm for a time by passing onward through the southern Gaul to the vicinity of the Pyrenees.

The diversion of the barbarous Cimbri to the quarter of Spain gave only a temporary respite to the Roman arms. They began to overrun the

Roman province in Gaul in separate large bodies, passing from the southward to the neighbourhood of the Rhine and the banks of the Danube. In one large body, they poured down by the passes of Carinthia, or the valley of Trent, to join another detachment on the banks of the Po. Marius, now in his fourth consulate, had for his special department the province of Gaul, and consequently the charge of opposing these invaders, who, from the cautious movements of the Roman army, now began to insult them as a dastardly foe that durst not meet them in the field. Marius signally displayed his talents as a general, by attacking these separate divisions, while they had spread themselves over the country, intent solely on ravage and plunder. In one campaign 200,000 of the barbarians were slain in the field, and 90,000 taken prisoners, among whom was Teutobocchus, one of their kings. In another engagement on the Po, the remainder of this savage horde was entirely destroyed. The popularity of Marius, from this great success, procured his election to the consulate for the fifth time, and the honours of a triumph.

The plunder of Jugurtha's kingdom brought a new accession of wealth to the Romans. They now found not only their ambition gratified by their extensive conquests, but their appetite for luxury, which was daily increasing. We have seen its effects in that shameful corruption of the senate, the highest order, and the natural guardians of the virtues of the republic. Yet even this was but the dawning of that profligacy of manners and of principle, which, from this period, we shall

see pervaded all ranks of the state. The annals of the Roman republic now become only the history of the leaders of different factions, who assuage their avarice, their ambition, and revenge in the blood of their fellow-citizens.

Livius Drusus, as tribune of the people, involved the republic in a war with the allied states, which was a prelude to those civil wars which ended in its destruction. This tribune renewed the project of Caius Gracchus for extending to the allies the rights of citizenship. The proposition was violently combated; the allies contended, that as they paid their taxes to the state, and supplied in war a great proportion of the legions, it was but just they should share the privileges of the republic as well as its burdens. On the other hand, to multiply to so vast an extent the popular votes in the comitia, and thus extend the field of corruption and the empire of tumult in all the public proceedings, appeared to involve the most ruinous consequences to the state.—The Roman populace itself dreaded the diminution of its influence by this admixture of aliens;\* and, in reality, the measure was cordially supported only by the factious and ambitious spirit of the tribunes themselves. In this state of public opinion, the fate of Drusus, who was stabbed by an unknown hand while sitting in his tribunal, excited neither alarm nor regret.

\* The number of Roman citizens, which, at the time of the census made by Servius Tullius, amounted only to 83,000, had increased, at the commencement of the Social War, to 463,000 men capable of bearing arms.—BEAUFORT, *Rep. Rom.* l. iv. c. 4.

But the allies in Italy were exasperated by the opposition to their claims, and by the murder of their champion. The principal states entered into a secret league for arming in support of their pretensions, while a formal embassy was sent, in their joint name, to demand from the senate and people of Rome what they represented as a matter of right and justice. The senate, apprised of all their preparations, sent a peremptory refusal, and ordered several legions to take the field against them, nominally headed by the consuls, but, in reality, under the command of Marius, Sylla, Pompey, and Crassus, all at that time men of the highest military reputation. But even under these able generals, the success of the allies in many severe conflicts was such, that the senate thought it prudent to listen to terms, and to allow the privilege of citizenship to the inhabitants of such of the states as should lay down their arms and return to submission and allegiance. These concessions dissolved the league, and the new citizens found, after all, that their coveted privileges were of very little consequence. The senate and censors formed them into eight new tribes, who in the comitia were to give their votes last, which reduced their influence to a mere trifle.

This war between Rome and her allies, thence termed the Social War, was an easy preparative for that which followed between her own citizens. To excite a civil war was, in the present situation of things, a matter of no great difficulty. It was only necessary that there should be two rivals in the path of ambition equally able and equally intrepid; and such men were Marius and Sylla.



The former, we have seen, had raised himself from obscurity by the mere force of talents. Sylla was of an illustrious family; he had all the talents of his rival, and yet more unbounded ambition; his manners were engaging; he had acquired immense wealth, and he knew how to employ it with great judgment in rendering himself popular. His distinguished military conduct in the Social War increased the public favour; and he was elected consul, with the charge of prosecuting a war in Asia against Mithridates, king of Pontus.

This prince had given the Romans the highest provocation. By the seizure of Bithynia and Cappadocia, he had encroached on the tributary states of the republic; he had seized a large part of Greece, and by his fleet in the *Ægean* Sea, had taken several ships belonging to the Romans. He had likewise authorized a general massacre, in one day, of every Roman citizen in the Lesser Asia. No sooner, however, had Sylla taken the field, than the intrigues of his rival Marius, and of Sulpitius, a tribune of the people who had devoted himself to the interest of Marius, procured his recall while still within the limits of Italy. He learned at the same time that some of his kindred had been murdered at Rome by the party of his enemies, and suspected that a similar fate was intended for himself. It was necessary, therefore, to form a bold and decisive resolution. His army, warmly attached to their leader, had received the order for his recall with high indignation. In an animated speech to his troops, he reminded them of the honours they had won under his command, and

exposed in strong terms the malicious and sanguinary designs of his rival, and the danger which such proceedings threatened to the commonwealth itself. He found the army disposed to implicit obedience to his commands, and he boldly proposed to lead them on to Rome. "Let us go," said they, with one voice; "lead us on to avenge the cause of oppressed liberty." Sylla accordingly led them on, and they entered Rome sword in hand. Marius and Sulpitius fled with precipitation from the city. Sylla restrained his army from committing any outrage, and then, with great deliberation, and without a shadow of opposition, proceeded to annul all the laws and ordinances which had passed during the administration of his rival. The senate, at his instigation, then pronounced a decree which proscribed Marius and Sulpitius, as enemies of their country, whom all persons were required to pursue and put to death. The consequence was, that the head of Sulpitius was soon after sent to Rome. Marius, alone and a fugitive, was taken in the marshes of Minturna, where he had sought concealment by plunging himself up to the chin in water. He was suffered to escape, and got over into Africa; where being still persecuted, and required by the Roman governor to depart from the province, "Go," said he to the messenger, "and tell thy master that thou hast seen Marius sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage." Plutarch, who relates this anecdote, says that Marius meant by it to claim the compassion of the Roman prætor, by drawing this comparison between his own lot and that of the fallen Carthage; both striking examples of the instability of fortune. Marius

then retired with his son to a small island of the African coast, where he soon after received intelligence that a strong party had been formed at Rome in his favour, where Cinna, one of his firmest friends and partisans, had been elected to the consulate.

One of the first measures of the new consul was to impeach Sylla before the assembly of the people. It was a law of the state, that any man invested with a military command might frustrate any charge brought against him by going on service. Sylla therefore defeated the purpose of his rivals by repairing immediately to his army, and commencing the campaign against Mithridates.

His partisans at Rome, in the mean time, took advantage of a series of violent and illegal proceedings of Cinna, to procure his deposition from office, and his expulsion from the city. Marius, returning to Italy at this juncture, found means to levy a considerable army, and, joining his forces to those of Cinna, they laid siege to Rome, at that time reduced to great distress by famine. In this situation, the senate capitulated with these traitors in arms, repealed the attainder of Marius, and restored Cinna to his consular function. They entered the city triumphantly at the head of the army, and immediately gave orders for a general massacre of all those citizens whom they regarded as their enemies. The scene was horrible beyond all description. The heads of the senators, streaming with blood, were stuck up before the *rostra*; "a dumb senate," says an ancient writer, but which yet cried aloud to Heaven for vengeance." At the succeeding election of ma-

gistrates, Marius and Cinna proclaimed themselves consul without the formality of a vote of the people; but the mind of Marius, ever the prey of turbulent passions, which he sought to allay by intemperate drinking, fell a victim to their joint effects, and he died, as is said, in a fit of debauch.

Sylla, in the meantime, with the army, had contributed to the glory of the republic by putting an end to the war with Mithridates. This very prince had conceived the proud design of wresting all Asia, together with Greece, from the dominion of the Romans; but the loss of two great battles at Chæronea and Orchomenos put an end to his prospects of ambition, and forced him to conclude a humiliating peace. "Sylla," says Velleius Paterculus, "deserved censure for many things; but one thing was meritorious—he left his private interest neglected till he had finished the war against the enemies of Rome." His own revenge was his real object; and a dreadful revenge it was.

On returning to Rome, he found the consuls Carbo and Norbanus (for Cinna was now dead) with above 200,000 men in arms to oppose him; but he was beloved by the soldiers, and he had address enough to seduce a whole consular army, with Cethegus, Verres, and the young Pompey, to join themselves to his party. With this powerful reinforcement he entirely defeated the consuls, and prepared now to act a part apparently contrary to every former indication of his nature. There cannot be a doubt that murder is a contagious disease; that with the first shedding of

blood the nature is infuriated, and the wretch once imbrued in it rushes on with enthusiasm to the most atrocious cruelties. Sylla had now caught the contagion. He ordered 6000 men to be massacred in cold blood, who, on promise of their lives, had laid down their arms. His proscriptions were dreadful beyond all example. Every day produced a new catalogue of those who were doomed to destruction; he declared that he would not spare an enemy whom he had in Italy. The punishment did not stop at the supposed offenders: their family and posterity to the third generation were declared infamous, and incapable of enjoying any office in the state; a proof that tyrannic cruelty is blind to consequences, and suspects not how short-lived, from the very nature of things, its empire must necessarily be. It was amidst these horrid scenes that the abandoned Catiline first gratified that profligate and savage disposition which afterwards aimed at the general destruction of the state.

Sylla was now without a rival in authority, and absolute master of the government, which, therefore, properly speaking, was no longer a republic; yet he chose to recur to the popular authority in order to establish himself in power, and he was nominated in the Comitia, *dictator for an unlimited space of time.*

He was now secure, and seemed to turn his thoughts to the restoration of order and tranquillity in the state. He restored the senate to its judicial power, of which, for a considerable time, it had been deprived. He published severe laws against murder and oppression; he regulated the

election to the high offices of prætor, quæstor, and tribune; prohibiting, with regard to the last, that any tribunes of the people should be chosen unless from the body of the senators, and enacting that their election to that function should preclude for ever their attaining to a higher dignity. This regulation effectually prevented that once enviable office from being any longer an object of ambition.

Having made these prudent and salutary reforms, Sylla took another step which excited universal surprise:—he resigned the dictatorship. The man who had destroyed above a hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens—who, in the course of his proscriptions, had put to death about ninety senators and above 2600 Roman knights—had courage to resign the absolute authority he had acquired, to become a private citizen, and to offer to give an account to the public of his conduct. But he had gained partisans to his interest more powerful, if not so numerous as his enemies. The senate were his friends; because, by his late regulations, he had restored to that body a great part of its ancient dignity; and had ever stood forth the supporter of their order against Marius, who was the champion of the people. The patricians saw, with pleasure, that they were once more considered as the superior rank in the state. In these respects, Sylla professed himself the friend of the ancient constitution of his country; and as such, in spite of all his atrocities, he has been regarded by the most enlightened historians. He, therefore, had a powerful party who approved of his political conduct; and, above all, he was the idol

of the army, who had all along profited by his measures and gained by his indulgence; he had given freedom to ten thousand slaves, and had gratified by rewards all his partisans. These were his guardians, and enabled him to walk with the security of an innocent man in that city which he had deluged with blood. Sylla, however, did not long survive his change of state. Pleasure and debauchery brought on him a nauseous disease, of which he died. He was certainly a man of great strength of mind, and had some of the qualities of an heroic character; but he lived in evil times, when it was impossible at once to be great and to be virtuous.

On the death of Sylla, the civil war began anew. Lepidus, the consul, aspiring at similar dominion, but a man of no abilities, levied a large army, and, on the pretence of restoring the forfeited estates to those whom Sylla had driven into banishment by his proscriptions, openly proclaimed his purpose of annulling all the late political regulations. The senate justly took the alarm: Catulus and Pompey were invested with authority to provide for the safety of the republic, and immediately taking the field with a superior force, Lepidus sustained two defeats, and took shelter in Sardinia, where he died.

It was now that Pompey began to distinguish himself. He had already, with no other command than as the general of an army, attained to the reputation of possessing great talents by his victories over the Marian party in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Sertorius was the head of that party in Spain, where his civil and military abilities

had gained him the highest popularity. Metellus and Pompey confessed their inability to subdue this formidable partisan in the field, by meanly setting a price upon his head. This policy was successful; it drew off Perpenna from his interest, who had hitherto supported his cause. The traitor invited his friend to a banquet, and a hired assassin stabbed him amidst the tumult of festivity. The party of Sertorius was undone by the death of its leader; and Pompey, returning to Rome, had the honours of a triumph.

Mithridates, king of Pontus, was earnestly bent upon recovering those possessions in Asia of which the Romans had deprived him. Lucullus, a very able general, was intrusted with the conduct of the war against him. He defeated Mithridates in two engagements, and recovered Bithynia. Meantime Mithridates had sent a fleet to Italy to support the rebellion of Spartacus, who was carrying on war against the republic at the head of forty thousand slaves, and had defeated an army commanded by two prætors, and another headed by both the consuls. This rebellion Pompey had the credit of subduing; although in fact the victory, which cost Spartacus his life, was achieved by Crassus, before Pompey's arrival. In the following year, Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, and the latter by his splendid festivals and shows, acquired with the people a high measure of popularity. Lucullus had now compelled Mithridates to retreat to Armenia, and the kingdom of Pontus submitted to the Roman arms.

Lucullus now marched against Mithridates



and Tigranes, and had the honour of signally defeating their united forces; but it was his misfortune or his blame to become unpopular with his army, and in the next engagement the Pontic king gained an important victory. The consequence was, that his enemies at Rome accused him of protracting the war from motives of interest. Pompey, who secretly wished to supplant him in his command, procured some of his friends, among whom were Julius Cæsar and Cicero, to propose that he should supersede Lucullus, and a decree was obtained to that effect. When the intelligence was brought to Pompey, he feigned the utmost surprise. The rival generals came to an interview in Galatia, which passed in mutual reproaches. "It is your policy," said Lucullus, "to triumph over an enemy whom another has already subdued, and thus to gather laurels which you have not won." "And you," said Pompey, "covet victory solely for the sake of plunder, and ravage countries only to fill your coffers." Both reproaches had some foundation in truth. Pompey prosecuted the war against Mithridates, and soon compelled his ally Tigranes into terms of unconditional submission. In the following campaign he put an end to the dominion of Mithridates. One of that prince's concubines treacherously surrendered to the Roman general a capital fortress of the kingdom; and Mithridates soon after, seeing his fortunes desperate, had recourse to a voluntary death. Pontus and Syria were then reduced to the condition of provinces of the Roman empire.

On the return of Lucullus to Rome, his ac-

knowledge services procured him the honour of a triumph; and he passed the remainder of his life in luxurious retirement. Fond at the same time of study, and of the conversation of the most ingenious and polite men of his time, he spent whole days with them in his library and gardens, which were open to all the learned men of Rome and Greece.\* If anything can be said to vindicate that excess to which he carried the luxury of the table, it is that his higher morals were irreproachable; and, voluptuary as he was, he had yet a higher pleasure in acts of humanity and beneficence.

While Pompey was thus employed in Asia, a most dangerous conspiracy threatened the entire destruction of Rome. Lucius Sergius Catilina, we have already observed, had been one of the ministers of the cruelties of Sylla. He was a youth of a noble family, but with a character stained with every manner of crime. While Sylla was dictator, he had risen to considerable honours: he had been quæstor, and had held a command in Africa as prætor; but his vices disgraced these splendid employments, and the wealth which he acquired by rapine and extortion he consumed in the most infamous debaucheries. Foiled in his design of obtaining the consulate for himself and his friend Piso, he first determined to wreak his vengeance on the more successful candidates, Cotta and Torquatus; and this his first conspiracy, which was to begin by the murder of these magistrates and all their partisans

\* See Plutarch in Vit. Lucul., who details at considerable length the luxurious life of this celebrated Roman.

among the senate, appears to have failed of success, more from the want of concerted measures in the conspirators themselves, than from the vigilance of the sovereign power of the state. The disappointment of this design\* served only to stimulate his daring and malignant spirit to enterprises of greater danger and atrocity. Lost in character, drowned in debt, and thence unable to find any other resource for the support of his vices and debaucheries, he now formed the desperate scheme of extirpating the whole body of the senate, of assassinating all the magistrates of the commonwealth, and satiating his avarice and ambition by the command of the republic and the plunder of the city.

Catiline gained to his interest the profligate of all ranks and denominations: knights, patricians, senators, being desperate bankrupts, and some high-born women of intriguing and abandoned character, helped to increase his party. To facilitate the execution of his designs, he once more solicited the consulship, but was again disappointed, from the known infamy of his character. The illustrious Cicero was elected to that office. Happy for the republic that in those perilous times she had this great man for her guardian and protector! He had for his colleague Caius Antonius, a weak and indolent man, who left to him all the burden, and, consequently, all the honour of the administration.

In the mean time, Catiline had brought his plot

\* Of this first conspiracy of Catiline, the accounts of the Roman historians are extremely imperfect and confused.

to maturity. Troops were levied, arms provided, a distinct department and function was assigned to each of the principal conspirators, and a day was fixed for the commencement of operations in the heart of Rome. The city was to be set fire to in a hundred different quarters at once; the consuls were to be assassinated; and an immense list was prepared of the chief citizens, who were doomed to instantaneous destruction. A plot of this nature, in which so many were concerned, could not long be kept secret. Fulvia, a woman of loose character, the mistress of one of the conspirators, probably gained by the spies of Cicero, gave notice to the consuls of the whole plan of the conspiracy. The senate passed that powerful decree which armed the consuls with dictatorial authority for the safety of the republic;\* and Cicero, under this ample warrant, might perhaps, without challenge of exceeding his powers, have seized the traitor, and put him instantly to death. But he wished to discover his numerous accomplices, and thus effectually to extinguish the conspiracy. We are astonished when we read that animated oration of Cicero, the first against Catiline; and know that the traitor had the audacity to sit in the senate-house while it was delivered, and while every man of worth or regard for character deserted the bench on which he sat, and left him a spectacle to the whole assembly. We are equally astonished when we learn that he was suffered still to remain at liberty; nay, to

\* *Dent operam consules ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat.*

leave Rome and to appear at the head of an army in open rebellion. But it was one peculiarity of the Roman constitution, during the republic, that the laws did not allow the detention of accused persons in order to trial. A citizen, accused of whatever crime, continued at full liberty till judgment was pronounced against him, and might, if he foresaw the issue of the trial, withdraw himself from Rome as a voluntary exile.

A remarkable circumstance, showing the extent of this formidable conspiracy, was now brought to light. The ambassadors of the Allobroges having fruitlessly applied to the Roman senate for a redress of grievances, Publius Lentulus, the prætor, gave them assurance in private of protection and favour, provided they would return to their province, and dispose their countrymen to arm in support of a powerful party, which he affirmed would soon have the command of the republic. Of this negotiation Cicero received intelligence. The consul, with infinite prudence, instructed his informant to encourage the correspondence between Lentulus and the ambassadors, and to urge the latter to demand from Lentulus a list of the names of all his partisans, in order to show to their countrymen the number and power of those friends on whose protection they might depend if they armed in support of this great revolution in the state. Lentulus fell into the snare that was laid for him. He gave a list of the names of all concerned in the conspiracy of Catiline to the ambassadors, who, setting out upon their journey, were waylaid, and their despatches seized by order of the consul. Cicero had now in his hands the most complete

evidence against the whole of the conspirators. Assembling the senate, he produced first the written evidence, consisting of letters, under the hands of the chief partisans of Catiline, together with lists of arms, and the places where they were deposited; as well as separate instructions for the ready co-operation of the different leaders in their distinct departments of the plot. The deputies of the Allobroges were produced before the senate, and made no scruple to confirm the proof arising from those documents.

It remained for the senate to determine what course was to be pursued with these detected traitors; and the difference of opinion which prevailed on that subject afforded a strong criterion of the alarming extent of this atrocious design, and the influence of those who secretly favoured it. Silanus, the consul elect, proposed an immediate sentence of death on the whole of the conspirators. His opinion was powerfully combated by Julius Cæsar, who maintained that the confiscation of their estates, and the committal of their persons in charge to some of the best affected of the Italian communities, was as effectual a curb to their designs, and more agreeable to law than a capital punishment. Cicero, without delivering any opinion, painted in strong colours the necessity of an immediate and powerful antidote to prevent the utter ruin of the state, and declared that he would execute the orders of the senate, whatever they should be, at the hazard of his own life. Cato closed the debate by observing, that the vote of that night would seal the fate of Rome, and convince her intestine enemies whether their party

or the guardians of the republic were to prevail in this awful conflict. He concluded by voting for the immediate execution of all the conspirators already in custody, and a vigorous effort for the extermination of the rebel and his army then in the field. This opinion prevailed, and was immediately carried into effect. Lentulus and his accomplices were the same day, without form of trial, strangled in prison by the consul's warrant.

An army, headed by Antonius, now took the field against Catiline. He came up with him in the neighbourhood of Fesulæ. The rebel made a desperate defence; but, overpowered by numbers, he threw himself, with frantic courage, into the midst of the enemy, and died a better death than his crimes merited.

Among the many who had incurred some suspicion of sharing in the guilty designs of Catiline, was Julius Cæsar. This young man, the son-in-law of Cinna, was of a most illustrious patrician family. The companions of his youth had known him only as a fop and a debauchee; but pleasure and effeminacy were the assumed disguises of a daring and ambitious spirit. Sylla, who was an excellent judge of human nature, had even penetrated into his real character, and numbered him among the proscribed. "There is many a Marius," said he, "in the person of that young man." Cæsar, aware of the dangerous consequences of these suspicions, quitted Rome, and did not return thither till after Sylla's death. He became more circumspect in his conduct, and learned the better to conceal his designs, till the proper opportunity

of bringing them into action. Meantime he courted the people, and was high in their favour before he accepted any office in the state. His largesses had gained a great party to his interest, though they ruined his private fortune; and when he was created ædile, it was generally believed he was in indigent circumstances; yet the games and spectacles which he exhibited surpassed every thing hitherto seen in magnificence.

At the time when Pompey returned from his Asiatic expedition, Cæsar held the office of prætor. The ambitious spirit of Pompey could brook neither a superior nor an equal. Crassus, a man of mean talents, but of a restless and ambitious spirit, had, by means of his enormous wealth, gained a very considerable party to his interest; for money at Rome could always insure popularity, and thus render even the weakest of men formidable to the liberties of their country. Thus with the greatest inequality of talents, Pompey and Crassus were rivals in the path of ambition; and Cæsar, who at this time aspired to the consulate, and was well aware that, by courting exclusively either of these rivals, he infallibly made the other his enemy, showed the reach of his political genius by artfully effecting a reconciliation between them, and thus securing the friendship of both. Cato foresaw the fatal consequences of this union of interests, which was termed the *Triumvirate*, and he openly prognosticated the ruin of the republic. In the meantime Cæsar, by their joint interest, obtained the consulate, and greatly increased his popularity by procuring a new agrarian law to be passed, which



authorized the division of certain lands in Campania among 20,000 of the poorer citizens who had at least three children.

It is not a little surprising that a measure of this kind, so contrary to all good policy, should be so frequently proposed and adopted in the Roman commonwealth. On this subject the reflections of Dr. Fergusson are most judicious:—"In great and populous cities, indigent citizens are ever likely to be numerous, and would be more so if the idle and profligate were taught to hope for bounties and gratuitous provisions to quiet their clamours and to suppress their disorder. If men were to have estates in the country because they are factious and turbulent in the city, it is evident that public lands, and all the resources of the most prosperous state, would not be sufficient to supply their wants. Commissioners appointed for the distribution of such public favours would be raised above the ordinary magistrates, and above the laws of their country. They might reward their own creatures, and keep the citizens in general in a state of dependence on their will. The authors of such proposals, while they are urging the state and the people to ruin, would be considered as their only patrons and friends. 'It is not the law I dread,' said Cato; 'it is the reward expected for obtaining it.'"<sup>\*</sup> These reflections are so obviously the dictates of good sense, that even the wildest demagogue must admit their force; and hence we are furnished with a just criterion to appreciate the real charac-

<sup>\*</sup> Fergusson's Rom. Rep., vol. ii. p. 411. 8vo. edit.

ters of the proposers of such measures, and to unmask the mock patriotism of such men as Cassius, the Gracchi, and Julius Cæsar.

Cæsar, in order to strengthen his interest with Pompey, gave him his daughter in marriage. He had now attained to that height of consideration with the people, that the senate was completely intimidated, and durst not oppose him. A stronger proof cannot be given than the passing of a law by which the senators took a solemn oath not to oppose any measure that should be determined in a popular assembly during his consulate. He gave the government of the provinces to his chief partisans, and took for himself those of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul and Illyria for five years, together with the command of four legions. The legion consisted at this time of about 4000 men.

Among the men whom Cæsar most dreaded was Cicero. He knew him to be a true patriot, a real friend of his country and its constitution, and therefore an enemy to all usurpation of a preponderating power in the state.\* He therefore beheld

\* The first occasion on which Cicero distinguished himself as an orator was one of great difficulty and delicacy—the defence of Roscius, who, during the time of Sylla's horrible proscriptions, had been robbed of his whole fortune by some of his wicked relations, who had put to death his father under the pretended authority of that proscription, though in reality his name was not in the list of victims. A favourite of Sylla, named Chrysogonus, had shared this infamous plunder, and, to secure his possession, accused the son of being the murderer of his father. Such was, at that time, the dread of offending Sylla, that none of the old advocates or orators would undertake the defence of this injured man. Cicero, then in his twenty-seventh year, nobly stood forth as his defender; and, with admirable skill

in him the greasest obstacle to his own ambitious designs, and resolved to accomplish his ruin. Cicero was aware of his own danger, and therefore had for some time declined all share in the offices of state; while his high character and eminent public services procured him the esteem of every man of virtue. But such were not the prevailing party in the republic, either in point of influence or numbers; for the populace ever bestowed their favour on those who best paid their court, and ministered most largely to their avarice and love of pleasure. Clodius, a mortal enemy of Cicero, was pitched on by Cæsar as his fittest instrument to accomplish the ruin of this illustrious man. By Cæsar's influence, Clodius was chosen one of the tribunes of the people, and was no sooner in office than he proposed various laws which tended to ingratiate himself with the people, and at the same time secure the favour of the chiefs of the republic. He procured the passing of an act for remitting the debts due by the poorer class for corn bought from the public granaries; and another for the restoring and increasing the number of public corporations, which had been abolished on account of the turbulence and faction of which they were the seminaries. He gained much influence with the senate by a regulation for abridging the power of the censor in purging that order; and finally, he proposed a law which made it a high offence to

and address, prevailed in obtaining justice for his client, without incurring the resentment of that man who was the protector of his oppressors. The reputation of the pleader rose from that moment to the highest pitch, and he was regarded as the first orator of the age.

condemn or put to death any citizen before he had been judged by the people. This important law was evidently levelled at Cicero, who, by his authority as consul, warranted indeed by a decree of the senate, had condemned Catiline's accomplices to death—a measure which the necessity of the times and the imminent peril of the republic had justified in the opinion of all good men.

Cicero, with all his high qualities, was of a weak and pusillanimous spirit. Instead of manfully endeavouring to avail himself of the great and essential services which he had rendered his country—sufficient to insure him the support of every good citizen in averting or opposing this adverse current which threatened his destruction—he meanly sunk under the apprehension of its force. His resolution entirely forsook him. He clothed himself in a mourning habit, as did most of the equestrian order to which he belonged; and he presented himself in the assembly of the people in the abject character of a suppliant whose life and fortune were entirely at their disposal. He claimed the friendship of Pompey, to whom he had done essential services; but he shamefully abandoned him. Cato, the real friend of Cicero, and who would have generously supported him at all hazards, was purposely invested with a commission to reduce the island of Cyprus, in order to remove him from Rome at this critical moment, when the fate of his friend was in dependence. Before leaving the city, he is said to have counselled Cicero to yield to the necessity of circumstances, and betake himself to voluntary banishment from his ungrateful country.

After some ineffectual endeavours to try the attachment of his former friends, which only ended in fresh mortification, Cicero followed the counsel of Cato. He set off in the middle of the night, and embarked at Brundisium for Macedonia, on his way to Thessalonica, where he had fixed the scene of his exile. Here he betrayed in a lamentable degree the weakness of his mind. The letters which he wrote to Atticus, it has been well observed, "resemble more the wailings of an infant, or the strains of a tragedy composed to draw tears, than the language of a man supporting the cause of integrity in the midst of unmerited trouble."\* "I wish I may see the day," he thus writes to his friend, "when I shall be disposed to thank you for having prevented me from resorting to a voluntary death; for I now bitterly regret that I yielded in that matter to your entreaty. What species of misfortune have I not endured? Did ever any one fall from so high a state, in so good a cause, with such abilities and knowledge, and with such a share of the public esteem? Cut off in such a career of glory, deprived of my fortune, torn from my children, debarred the sight of a brother dearer to me than myself—but my tears will not allow me to proceed." In contemplating such a picture, the historian I have just quoted truly says, "It appears from this and many other scenes of the life of this remarkable man, that though he loved virtuous actions, yet his virtue was accompanied with so unsuitable a thirst of the praise to which it entitled him, that his mind was unable to sustain itself without this foreign assistance;

\* Fergusson's Rom. Rep., vol. ii. p. 448.

and when the praise to which he aspired for his consulate was changed into obloquy and scorn, he seems to have lost the sense of good or evil in his own conduct and character." How different this conduct from the sentiments he had expressed as a philosopher, in his beautiful treatise, "*De Finibus*," l. i.: "*Succumbere doloribus, eosque humili animo imbecilloque ferre, miserum est: ob eamque debilitatem animi, multi parentes, multi amicos, nonnulli patriam, plerique autem seipsos penitus perdiderunt.*"\* But speculative and practical philosophy are widely different.

Cicero's departure from Rome was regarded as a full justification of that sentence of banishment which Clodius immediately caused to be passed against him as an enemy of the republic, accompanied with a decree for confiscating his whole estates, and demolishing and razing to the ground his elegant palaces and villas. Such were the rewards of that true patriot whom, a few months before, his country had justly hailed as its preserver from utter destruction! But popular opinion is ever apt to pass from one extreme to another; and the latter part of the life of Cicero was a perpetual alternation of triumph and disgrace.

We have remarked that, in the divisions of the provinces between Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus, the first of these had for his share those extensive territories on both sides of the Alps, distinguished by the names of Gallia Cisalpina and Trans-

\* "To yield to misfortunes, and bear them weakly, is miserable. By such infirmity of mind, many have brought ruin on their relations and friends, some even on their country, but more on themselves."

alpina. Of these he obtained the government for five years, and in that period he carried to its highest pitch the military glory of the republic, and his own reputation as a consummate general. The Helvetians, leaving their own territory, had attempted to obtain a settlement within the Roman province. Cæsar, in the first year of his government, utterly defeated these invaders, and drove them back to their native seats with the loss of nearly 200,000 slain in the field. The Germans under Ariovistus, who had attempted a similar invasion, were repelled with immense slaughter, their leader narrowly escaping in a small boat across the Rhine. The Belgæ, the Nervii, the Celtæ, the Suevi, Menapii, and other warlike nations, were all successively brought under subjection. In the fourth year of his command he invaded Britain. The motive to this enterprise was purely ambition, although the pretext was that the Britons were the aggressors, by sending supplies to the hostile tribes of Gaul. Cæsar landed near Deal, and found a much more formidable opposition than he had expected, the natives displaying considerable military skill, with the most determined courage. The Romans, indeed, gained some advantages; but Cæsar soon became sensible that the conquest of the island required a much greater force than had yet been brought against it, and was not to be achieved in a single campaign. The approach of winter in the country of an enemy whose spirit seemed to be roused to the most desperate resistance, gave him some alarm for the safety of his army; and, therefore, binding the conquered parts of the country to

terms of submission, he thought it prudent to re-embark his legions, and, after settling them in winter-quarters in Gaul, returned himself to Italy, to attend to the concerns of the capital, where the splendour of his foreign campaigns had highly increased his popularity.

His great acquisition of fame had now sensibly obscured the glory of Pompey, whose influence was visibly on the decline. To strengthen himself by the interest and by the talents of Cicero, whom he had before so meanly abandoned, he now procured the recall of that illustrious exile, and the repeal of the sentence of confiscation which had deprived him of his whole property. Cicero returned to his country after an absence of sixteen months. His journey from Brundisium to Rome was a triumphal procession. All Italy, as he said himself, seemed to flock together to hail his auspicious return; that single day made his glory immortal.\* He was loaded with honours; and his houses and villas, which had been razed to the ground, were rebuilt which increased magnificence at the expense of the public.

By the influence of Cicero, Pompey regained for a while his popularity. The triumvirate, though secretly animated with mutual jealousy, still continued to support each other in their power. Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls; the former having, for five years, the government of Spain, and the latter that of Syria, Greece,

\* "Meus quidem reditus is fuit, ut a Brundisio usque ad Romam agmen perpetuum totius Italiae viderem. Unus ille dies mihi quidem instar immortalitatis fuit."



and Egypt. They had unlimited power to levy troops, and to exact whatever pecuniary supplies they found necessary, from the tributary princes and states under their government. Crassus, insatiable in accumulating wealth, plundered the Eastern provinces without mercy; but having engaged in an inconsiderate expedition against the Parthians, he was totally defeated, his whole army cut to pieces, and he himself and his son were slain in the field.

Cæsar, in the mean time, was prosecuting his military operations in Gaul, and seemed to take no concern in the affairs of Rome; yet, in reality, his influence there now regulated every measure of importance. His partisans, to whom he remitted large sums of money, overruled all proceedings in the comitia, and carried whatever measures of a public nature he chose to direct as instrumental to his own views. Pompey was not blind to these views; and the apparent union and cordiality which they yet affected to maintain was any thing but real. We shall soon see an open rupture, and a contention for undivided sovereignty, whose issue must decide the fate of the commonwealth.

## CHAPTER II.

Cæsar passes the Rubicon—Marches to Rome—Named Dictator—Battle of Pharsalia—Flight and Death of Pompey—Defeat of Pharnaces—Death of Cato—Cæsar's Reforms in the Roman State—Reform of the Calendar—Is created Perpetual Dictator with the title of Imperator—Character of Cæsar—Is assassinated—Artful conduct of Mark Antony—His ambitious Views—Second Triumvirate—Bloody Proscription—Death of Cicero—Battle of Philippi, and End of the Republic—Battle of Actium—Death of Antony and Cleopatra—Octavius (afterwards Augustus) sole Master of the Roman Empire.

THE brilliancy of the warlike exploits of Cæsar, and the influence of his partisans in the public measures of the commonwealth, easily procured the prolongation of his government of the Gauls, to a period double the length of that for which it had been originally granted. In the course of ten years, he had reduced the greater part of what is now called France into a Roman province; a conquest in which his political talents were no less signally displayed than his abilities as a general. His "Commentaries," a military journal which contains a brief and perspicuous detail of his campaigns, are no less a proof of his excelling in those splendid features of a public character, than of his possessing all the qualities of a skilful and eloquent historian.

The renewed term of his government was on the eve of expiring; but this extraordinary man had no design of relinquishing his military command. To secure himself against a deprivation of power, he bribed Curio, one of the tribunes, to make a proposal which wore the appearance of great moderation, and regard for the public liberty. This was, that Cæsar and Pompey should either both continue in their governments—or both be recalled, as they were equally capable of endangering the safety of the commonwealth by an abuse of power. The motion passed, and Cæsar immediately offered to resign, on condition that his rival should follow his example; but Pompey rejected the proposal, probably aware of the real designs of Cæsar, but too confidently relying on the strength of his own party, and the influence he had with his troops. A civil war was the necessary consequence. Every connexion between these two ambitious men was now at an end. The death of Julia, the daughter of Cæsar, and wife of Pompey, dissolved that feeble bond of union which had hitherto subsisted between them.\* They were now declared enemies, and each prepared to assert, by arms, his title to an unrestrained dominion over his country. It is not a little surprising, that the citizens of Rome should deliberately prepare to sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the decision of such a contest, with

\* This lady died in childbed. She was beloved by Pompey with the fondest affection; and thus, in the expressive words of Velleius Paterculus, *erat medium male coherens inter Pompeium et Cæsarem concordiae pignus*.—Lib. ii. c. 47.

all the zeal of men who fight for their most valuable rights and possessions.

Pompey had on his side the consuls and a great part of the senate. In one respect he had justice on his side, for the term of his government was not yet at an end, and the proposed accommodation was evidently a snare laid for him by Cæsar. Cato and Cicero had taken part with Pompey, which showed their sense of the justice of his cause, for they were no false patriots. But Cæsar had in his favour a victorious army of veteran troops, profound military skill, and a great portion of popularity, gained by his general character of humanity, and well-employed largesses among all ranks of the people.

The boundary which separates Italy from Cisalpine Gaul is a small river named the Rubicon. The Roman senate, aware of the designs of Cæsar, had pronounced a decree, devoting to the infernal gods whatever general should presume to pass this boundary with an army, a legion, or even a single cohort.

Cæsar, who, with all his ambition, inherited a large share of the benevolent affections, did not resolve on the decisive step which he had now taken without some compunction of mind. Arrived with his army at the border of his province, he hesitated for some time, while he pictured to himself the inevitable miseries of that civil war, in which he was now preparing to unsheath the sword. "If I pass this small stream," said he, "in what calamities must I involve my country! Yet, if I do not, I myself am ruined." The latter

consideration was too powerful. Ambition, too, presented allurements, which to a mind like Cæsar's were irresistible. He passed the boundary, and took possession of Ariminum, where he was joined by Mark Antony and Cassius. They were at that time *tribunes of the people*, and, after endeavouring in vain to serve his interest at Rome, by strenuously opposing a decree of the senate, which required Cæsar to disband his army, now openly joined him in the field with a considerable body of their followers.

Rome was now in the utmost alarm and consternation. Cæsar had with him ten legions, while Pompey, to whom the city looked for its protection, and whom the senate had invested with all authority to defend the republic, had, with unpardonable supineness, taken no measures to guard against a step of this kind, which he might well have apprehended from the daring genius of his rival. He now ordered in haste a general levy to be made over all Italy; but found, to his mortification, that Cæsar had pre-occupied the most important places whence troops were to be drawn, and was daily joined by fresh reinforcements. His well-timed bounties, and that clemency which he showed on every success of his arms, and which was truly a part of his nature, had gained him the general favour. The circumstance of the two tribunes espousing his cause gave it a show of patriotism, and he now publicly proclaimed that his sole purpose in leaving his government was to vindicate the authority of *the people*, thus injured in the persons of their magistrates.

Pompey was now sensible of his weakness. The voice of the public openly expressed an impatient desire for the arrival of Cæsar, who, on his part, was rapidly advancing to the gates of Rome, when Pompey quitted the city, followed by the consuls and the greater part of the senators. Unable to collect a sufficient force in Italy, he passed over into Epirus. The East had been the scene of his conquests, and thence he trusted that he would be supplied both with troops and treasure. Before sailing from Brundisium, he had declared that he would treat all those as enemies who did not follow him. Cæsar, with more wisdom, declared that he would esteem all those his friends who did not arm against him.

Cæsar, by immediately following Pompey, might, perhaps, have brought the war to a speedy termination; but, besides the want of transports for the conveyance of his army, he judged it hazardous to leave Italy defenceless against the lieutenants of Pompey, then in considerable force in the province of Spain. His first objects, therefore, were the securing the seat of empire, and reducing the hostile army under Pompey's officers. After making his public entry into Rome, where he was received with the loudest acclamations, and possessing himself of the public treasury, he set out for Spain. Marseilles, which lay in his route, had declared for his rival; but, leaving Trebonius to besiege it, he proceeded in his march to meet the lieutenants of Pompey, Afranius and Petreius. These he speedily subdued, and, compelling them to yield at discretion, sent them home to Rome to proclaim his clemency and moderation. In the space of

forty days all Spain submitted to the arms of Cæsar, and he returned victoriously to Rome, where, in his absence, he had been proclaimed dictator. In that quality he presided at the annual election of the chief magistrates of the state, and was himself elected consul. He had now that legal title to act in the name of the republic, which he had hitherto wanted. If the power of an usurper is capable of being validated by the subsequent voluntary sanction of those over whom it is usurped, Cæsar had now that ratification.

Meantime Pompey was strenuously collecting forces in Greece, Macedonia, and Epirus. He likewise drew large supplies from the sovereigns of Asia, and had already mustered an army of five legions, with five hundred ships of war, under the command of Bibulus. Cæsar embarked at Brundisium with an equal armament of five legions, and the two armies came in sight of each other near Dyrrachium in Illyria. After one doubtful engagement, in which the advantage was rather on the side of Pompey, Cæsar led him on to Macedonia, where he had two additional legions under his lieutenant Calvinus. Pompey, who was easily elated with every appearance of success, flattered himself that this was a retreat upon the part of his enemy. He was, therefore, anxious to come up with him, and eager to terminate the war by a general engagement. This was exactly what Cæsar wished. This important battle was fought in the field of Pharsalia. The army of Pompey amounted to forty-five thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, which was more than double that of his rival; and so confident of victory were the for-

mer, that they adorned their tents with festoons of laurel and myrtle, and prepared a splendid banquet against their return from the battle. Vain and presumptuous preparations! Of this immense army, fifteen thousand were left dead on the field, and twenty-four thousand surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and cheerfully incorporated themselves into the army of the victor, whose loss, in all, did not exceed two hundred men. Cæsar found in the camp of Pompey all his papers containing the correspondence he carried on with the chief of his partisans at Rome. The sagacious and magnanimous chief committed them unopened to the flames, declaring that he wished rather to be ignorant who were his enemies, than to be obliged to punish them.

After this fatal engagement, Pompey experienced all the miseries of a fugitive. The last scenes of the life of this illustrious man afford a striking picture of the vicissitudes of fortune, and the instability of all human greatness. He passed the first night, after his defeat, in the solitary hut of a fisherman upon the sea-coast. Thence he went on board a vessel, which landed him first at Amphipolis; whence he sailed to Lesbos, where his wife Cornelia was waiting, in anxious expectation, the issue of the late decisive conflict. They met upon the sea-shore. Pompey embraced her without uttering a word, and this silence spoke at once the whole extent of her misfortune. They fled for protection to Egypt, where Pompey expected to find a welcome asylum at the court of the young Ptolemy, whose father Auletes had owed to him his settlement upon the throne. But Pto-



lemy was then at war with his sister Cleopatra, to whom their father had jointly bequeathed the kingdom, and his ministers apprehending that Pompey would take the part of Cleopatra, in order to enforce that settlement of which the Roman people were appointed the executors, immediately determined his destruction. The ship which carried Pompey and Cornelia had approached within sight of the land, and he despatched a messenger ashore, desiring an audience of the Egyptian monarch. A single boat rowed off from the land, in which came some officers with orders to bring him on shore; and he parted with many tears from Cornelia, who was justly apprehensive of his safety, but could not foresee all the misery of his fate.

They were still in sight of the ship, and Pompey, who began to fear that he was betrayed, sought to ingratiate himself with those to whom he was now a prisoner. He reminded some of them of having served under his banners, when a few years before he was the conqueror of the East; but they, answering nothing, rowed on in gloomy silence till they reached the land. While Pompey rose to step on shore, he received the stroke of a dagger in the side, and, decently covering his face with his robe, resigned himself to his fate. They cut off his head, and cast his body naked upon the sand; where a faithful slave, who had attended him, stealing to the place during the silence of the night, made a small funeral pile from the fragments of a boat, and burnt the body, carrying the ashes to Cornelia. "Princeps Romani, nominis imperio arbitrioque Epyptii mancipii jugulatus est. Hic post tres consulatus, et totidem triumphos, domitumque terrarum orbem,

vitæ fuit exitus. In tantum in illo viro a se discordante fortuna, ut cui modò ad victoriam terra defuerat deesset ad sepulchram.”\*

Cæsar, being told of the course which Pompey had steered, sailed directly to Alexandria. When informed of his fate, he could not restrain his tears; and when his murderers presented to him the head of that unhappy man, which they judged must have been to him a grateful spectacle, he turned aside with horror from the sight. He caused every honour to be paid to his memory, and from that time showed the utmost indulgence and even beneficence to the partisans of his unfortunate rival. Those men have a bad opinion of human nature, who ascribe this conduct altogether to a refined policy, and account Cæsar only the greater hypocrite, the more examples he showed of the milder virtues. An hypothesis so contrary to every rule of candid judgment, is contradicted by the whole tenour of this truly great man's life.

Ptolemy Auletes, the father of the present sovereign of Egypt, had named, as we before remarked, the Roman people as the executors of his testamentary settlement of the kingdom; and Cæsar, as acting in name of the republic, now took on himself the right of deciding between the pretensions of Cleopatra and her brother. The

\* “He, the noblest of the Roman name, fell by the orders of an Egyptian bondsman. Such was the miserable end of him who had thrice borne the dignity of consul, thrice been honoured with a triumph, and been, in fact, the lord of the world. In him so great was the reverse of fortune, that he who had but lately found the earth too small for his conquests, could not now command enough to cover his remains.”—VELL. PATER. ii. 25.

charms of Cleopatra had probably their influence on this decision. Such, at least, was the allegation of the partisans of the young Ptolemy, who for several months maintained his cause by force of arms, and besieged Cæsar in the city of Alexandria. In this war the young Ptolemy was killed, and an accident happened of which the general consequences were more to be deplored; the greater part of the celebrated library of the Ptolemies was burnt to the ground.\* The issue of the war would probably have been fatal to Cæsar, had he not received timely succours from Asia. Thus reinforced, he brought the kingdom of Egypt under complete subjection, bestowing the sovereignty jointly upon Cleopatra and a younger Ptolemy, a child of eleven years of age, the brother of the last prince.

He now turned his arms against Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, who had seized the kingdom of Pontus, and meditated, after his father's example, to strip the Romans of their Asiatic possessions. This war he very speedily terminated, intimating its issue to his friends at Rome in three words, *Veni, vidi, vici.*†

\* The royal library of Alexandria was said to consist of seven hundred thousand volumes: of these four hundred thousand, deposited in the quarter of the city called Bruchion, were destroyed on this occasion; the other part, containing three hundred thousand, was within the Serapeum, and escaped the flames. There it was that Cleopatra deposited the two hundred thousand volumes of the Pergamean Library, given to her by Mark Antony. This was increased from age to age, till it was finally burnt by the caliph Omar, in A. D. 642.

† "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Thus having established order and tranquillity in the East, Cæsar returned to Rome, where he was elected consul for the ensuing year, and dictator, the third time that he had enjoyed both these dignities. Rome stood in need of his presence; for the troops which, under the command of Mark Antony, had remained in Italy, had spread universal disorder and anarchy. The partisans of his late rival were at the same time in arms in Africa, headed by Scipio and Cato, who, together with the sons of Pompey, had fled thither after the defeat of Pharsalia, and received cordial aid from Juba, king of Mauritania. Cæsar, therefore, found the chief obstacle to his ambition in this quarter; and, embarking for Africa, was obliged for some time to act with the greatest caution and avoid a general engagement with an enemy whose effective forces greatly outnumbered his own. He gained, however, several advantages, and his high reputation, together with the prevailing opinion of that prosperous fortune which had hitherto attended all his enterprises, caused daily desertions to his standard from the ranks of his enemies. A favourable situation at length presenting itself, he engaged the allied army at Thapsus, and obtained a complete victory. Scipio perished in his passage to Spain. Cato alone remained, whose indomitable spirit no reverse of fortune was capable of forcing to yield to any terms of submission. With a frantic resolution, he shut himself up in Utica with a few noble spirits, who, like himself, disdained to yield to the Master of Rome. He formed the principal citizens into a senate, and for some time che-

rished the desperate purpose of holding out the town against the whole force which Cæsar could bring against it. But the spirits of his party were not equal to his own, and some of his friends venturing to hint a wish for a timely capitulation, Cato counselled them to provide as they judged best for their own safety. After supper, during which he conversed with his usual cheerfulness, he retired to his apartment, and, for a while, occupied himself in perusing Plato's "Dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul." He then composed himself to sleep, and, after a short repose, inquiring whether his friends had saved themselves by flight, and being assured that all was well, he calmly fell upon his sword.

Juba was now driven from his kingdom, and Mauritania became a Roman province. The victorious Cæsar returned to Rome. The natural clemency of his disposition now signally displayed itself: he remembered no longer that there had been opposite parties, but showed the same humane indulgence to the friends of Pompey, as if they had never been his enemies. Many of them he raised to offices of dignity and emolument, and found them thenceforward the most attached of his partisans. He was decreed a splendid triumph, and, on that occasion, gratified the people with the most magnificent games and entertainments. Master of the state, he from this time employed his whole attention in contributing to its prosperity and happiness. He turned his mind to the reformation of abuses of every kind. He repressed luxury by sumptuary laws; stimulated industry by rewards; and, by sedulously promoting the com-

forts of the lower class of citizens, gave the most effectual encouragement to population. While he thus advanced the prosperity of the capital, he introduced order and economy into the government of the provinces, where hitherto every species of oppression and peculation had been permitted and countenanced.

The genius of Cæsar was not confined to the arts of government, but carried its researches into every branch of science and philosophy. The duration of the year at this time was twelve lunar months, with an intercalation of twenty-two or twenty-three days, alternately, at the end of every two years: but the pontiffs either introduced or omitted the intercalation according to circumstances, as they wanted to abridge or prolong the time of the magistrates' continuing in office—and thus there was the greatest confusion in the calendar. Cæsar, who was a proficient in astronomy, and to whose writings in that science even Ptolemy confesses that he owed information, corrected the errors of the calendar, by fixing the solar year at three hundred and sixty-five days, with an intercalation of one day every fourth year.\*

\* Romulus divided the year into ten months, which consisted of three hundred and four days; but Numa added two other months, January and February, which made his year to contain three hundred and fifty-four days. But this computation, falling short of the space of a regular year by ten days and six hours nearly, occasioned, every eighth year, an interposition of three whole months, which they called the intercalary or leap year. The care of making this intercalation being left to the priests, they introduced or omitted a month whenever they pleased, till at last there was such disorder, that festivals came to be

The sons of Pompey, Cneius and Sextus, attempted to rekindle the war in Spain; but they were soon subdued by Cæsar in a decisive engagement at Munda. Returning from this expedition to Rome, he was hailed the Father of his Country, was created consul for ten years, and perpetual dictator. His person was declared *sacred*; as a symbol of which he was allowed to wear constantly a circlet of laurel, hitherto the temporary distinction of a triumphant general. In like manner the epithet of *imperator*, which was only occasionally bestowed on the commander of a victorious army, was now conferred on Cæsar as a perpetual title of honour, as he was invested for life with the power of chief commander of the whole armies of the state.

By these public acts and decrees of the Roman people, accumulating the most despotic powers of sovereignty in the person of an individual, the commonwealth of Rome had now voluntarily re-

kept at a season quite different from that of their first institution. To remedy these abuses, Julius Cæsar added the odd ten days to Numa's year; and, lest the odd six hours should create confusion, he ordered that, every fourth year, one whole day should be inserted, next after the twenty-third of February, or next before the sixth of the calends of March; for which reason the supernumerary day was called *dies bis-sextus*, and thence the leap year came to be called *annus bis-sextilis*. This is the Julian or Old Style. Yet, because there wanted eleven minutes in the six odd hours of Julius's year; the equinoxes and solstices, losing something continually, were found, about the year 1584, to have run back ten whole days: for which reason Pope Gregory XIII. cut off ten days to bring them to their proper places; and this is called the Gregorian or New Style.

signed its liberties: the ancient republican constitution was at an end: there were none who either had an interest or a desire to maintain it; for the passion for manly independence, and the anxious vindication of their rights as free citizens, which in former times animated the great body of the people, and checked all inordinate ambition in individuals, had now given place to that selfish spirit which is content with the pleasures of luxury, and seeks the gratification of its narrow schemes of enjoyment by courting the favour of a sovereign, or meanly flattering his passions. The Roman liberty, as Montesquieu has well observed, was not extinguished by the ambition of a Pompey or of a Cæsar. If the sentiments of Cæsar and Pompey had been the same with those of Cato, others would have cherished the same ambitious thoughts which they discovered; and since the republic was fated to fall, there never would have been wanting a hand to drag it to destruction.

Yet though the fall of the constitution is the necessary and unavoidable consequence of the decay of those principles by which it had originally been supported, men must reprobate the instrument of usurpation, by which their ruin is finally accomplished. In this point of view the conduct of Cæsar cannot be vindicated on the score of right. He was an usurper; and, had it been possible to restore the Roman liberty and the ancient fabric of the commonwealth by the extinction of the tyrant, an open and manly use of the sword for his destruction had been a meritorious and patriotic attempt. But here lay the delusion: it may be the fact, that those men who accomplished



the death of Cæsar acted upon principles truly virtuous and patriotic; they did, perhaps, believe that by his death they would restore the liberty and ancient constitution of their country: but we must deplore the narrowness of their views, who did not perceive that an internal principle of corruption had annihilated the one, and must have proceeded to extinguish the other, although Julius Cæsar had never been born. Even Cicero, whose political principles led him to approve of the death of Cæsar, candidly owns that the republic gained nothing by that event:—"Interfecto domino, liberi non sumus: non fuit dominus ille fugiendus: sublato enim tyranno, tyrannida manere video."\*

The personal character, too, of this illustrious man has greatly contributed to increase the censure of those who conspired and accomplished his death;† but in impartial reasoning on the merit

\* "The master is slain, but we are not the more free. It was not he who was to be dreaded. The tyrant is indeed removed, but the tyranny remains."—Cic. *ad Attic.* xiv. 14.

† Julius Cæsar united in himself more of the advantages of mind and body than perhaps any of his cotemporaries, and to these were added the splendour of ancestry; for he could trace his pedigree, on his mother's side, up to Ancus Martius; and the Julian family, of which he was the head, were generally believed to have descended from the Trojan Æneas. Velleius Paterculus thus shortly enumerates these striking characteristics of Cæsar:—"Hic nobilissima Juliorum genitus familia, et quod enter omnes antiquissimos constabat, ab Anchise et Venere deducens genus, forma omnium civium excellentissimus, vigore animi acerrimus, munificentia effusissimus, animo supra humanam et naturam et fidem evectus, magnitudine cogitationum, celeritate bel-

or demerit of this action, it is not equitable to allow force to such considerations.

The magnificent schemes of a public nature which Cæsar had formed, would certainly have contributed both to his own glory and to the interest and happiness of the people whom he governed; and a just sense of these benefits was doubtless the principal cause of his popularity while alive, and of the splendid reputation which has attended his memory. He had proposed to collect, arrange, and methodize the laws of his country. He had employed the most learned men of his times to collect libraries for the public use. He had planned the most magnificent structures for the embellishment of the city, and the preservation of the public records. He projected the draining of the marshes of Italy, which rendered the whole country unwholesome; the deepening the bed of the Tiber, and the construction of a harbour at the mouth of that river, capable of receiving the largest vessels both for war and merchandise. We have noticed the reforms which he introduced in the government of the provinces. He proposed to have a complete survey and geo-

landi, patientia periculorum, magno illi Alexandro, sed sobrio nec iracundo, similimus."—VELL. PAT. ii. 41.

"Born of the most illustrious family of the Julii, and tracing his highest descent from Anchises and Venus, he excelled all his fellow-citizens in the graces of his person, the vigour of his mind, and the splendour of his munificence; and that to a degree not only beyond human nature, but beyond human conception: in the magnitude of his designs, his promptitude in war, his indifference to danger, he was the equal of the great Alexander, but in command over himself far his superior."

graphical delineation made of the whole Roman empire. These were certainly schemes equally splendid and beneficial to the public. They create a just admiration of the character of Cæsar, and make us regret that blind and infatuated zeal which frustrated the accomplishment of those great designs, without giving in exchange for them any real or substantial good.

It was almost the only weakness of this truly great man, that, possessing the reality of sovereign power, he was not satisfied without obtaining likewise its external pageantry. To gratify this frivolous passion, the senate had decreed him the privilege of constantly wearing the triumphal robe, of having a gilded chair of state, and of taking the precedence of all the magistrates of the commonwealth. He was allowed a constant escort of knights and senators; his birthday was ordained to be solemnized as a festival through the whole empire, and a temple was built and priests appointed to offer sacrifice unto the Julian Jupiter. It was generally believed that he coveted a yet more dangerous distinction, and had determined that the title of KING, which, from the days of the last Tarquin, had been odious to every Roman ear, should be revived in his person. The report was current that a party of the senators had determined to crown him in public by that title on the idēs of March. A conspiracy had been for some time formed, at the head of which were Marcus Brutus and Caius Cassius, whom Cæsar had placed on the list of prætors, and intrusted with the higher jurisdiction of the city—the former a man whom he had

reason to believe most sincerely attached to him, as he had saved his life at the battle of Pharsalia, and given him numberless proofs of his affection. The conspirators determined to execute their purpose on that day which had been destined for bestowing on Cæsar the regal title. He had no sooner taken his place in the senate-house, than the conspirators, surrounding him, plunged their daggers into his body: he defended himself for some time, till, seeing Brutus among the assassins, whom he had always distinguished by the epithet of his son, he resigned himself to his fate, and fell, pierced with twenty-three wounds, at the foot of Pompey's statue.

The conspirators had no sooner accomplished their purpose than they ran through the streets of the city, proclaiming aloud that the king of Rome was dead; but the effect did not answer their expectation. The people, almost to a man, seemed struck with horror at the deed. They loved Cæsar, master as he was of their lives and liberties. Mark Antony, who was consul, and Lepidus, the general of the horse, ambitious themselves of succeeding to the power of the dictator, resolved to pave the way for it by avenging his death. The senate was convoked to determine whether the ordinances of the late dictator had the force of law;—that is to say, whether Cæsar was an usurper, or was invested with legal authority. It was a nice question, but it required an immediate determination. The senators were of opposite opinions. The party of the assassins was formidable, from the experience of what they had the courage to attempt: yet the extreme disorder

that must have ensued from annulling all the laws and regulations of the dictator, made it a thing impossible to be thought of in the present situation of affairs. The senate had recourse to an equivocal, and, in fact, a contradictory decree; which was, to confirm all the laws of Cæsar, and to declare at the same time that his murderers should not be prosecuted. But the latter part of this decree was evaded by the art of Antony, who determined to call forth the vengeance of the people upon the heads of those men whom he justly regarded as the chief obstacles to his own designs of ambition.

Cæsar had adopted Caius Octavius, the grandson of his sister Julia, and left him heir to the greatest part of his fortune. He had appointed several of the conspirators themselves for his tutors, and had bequeathed a large legacy to the people of Rome, to be divided among the whole of the citizens. These bequests redoubled the affection of the people, and they flocked to attend his obsequies, penetrated with the highest regard to his memory, and with the utmost indignation against his murderers. Mark Antony took advantage of these favourable dispositions. The body being laid on a couch of state in the *forum*, he mounted the consul's tribunal, and, after reading the decree of the senate, which had conferred upon Cæsar even the honours due to a divinity, he entered into an enumeration of all his illustrious achievements for the glory and aggrandizement of the state: he then proceeded to recount the examples of his clemency, and heightened all his virtues with the most pathetic eloquence. "By these

titles we have sworn that his person should be held sacred and inviolable; "and here," said he, "behold the force of our oaths." At these words he lifted up the robe which covered the body, and, holding it out to the people, who melted into tears, he showed it all covered with blood, and pierced with the daggers of the conspirators. A general cry of vengeance was heard. The populace strove to increase the funeral pile, by throwing into it their most precious effects; while numbers ran to destroy and set fire to the houses of the murderers. These at first fled to the Capitol for safety; but finding their lives even there in the utmost hazard, prudently quitted the city, and sought shelter in the distant provinces.

The consul Antony, by the steps he had hitherto taken, wanted only to sound the dispositions of the people. Finding these to his wish, he very soon began to discover his own views of ambition. He was possessed of the whole of the dictator's papers. He had received likewise from Calpurnia, the widow, all the treasures of Cæsar. Not content with these, he made a traffic of fabricating acts and deeds, to which he counterfeited the dictator's subscription, and availed himself of them as genuine. He next persuaded the senate, on pretence that his personal safety was in danger, to allow him a guard; and, under that decree, he chose six thousand of the ablest veterans, whom he embodied and armed. Thus secured, he found himself absolute master in Rome. In all revolutions, there are critical moments when all that is requisite to the attainment of the supreme power is the courage to assume it.

But the ambition of Antony was frustrated by the measures of a rival against whom he had not provided. The young Octavius arrived in Rome, and, declaring himself the heir of Cæsar, found no other title necessary to gain the favour of the people—a powerful stimulant to the ambitious plan he had secretly formed of succeeding to the full power of the dictator. Pursuing the same object with Antony, it was impossible they could long be on good terms. An open rupture ensued on occasion of the government of Cisalpine Gaul, which Antony, in opposition to the will of the dictator, who had decreed it to Decimus Brutus, endeavoured to secure for himself. This province, from its vicinity to the capital, was always of prime importance to the ruler of the state.

Octavius on this occasion armed against him, in order to enforce the will of his adopted father. He had the address to persuade the senate into his views, and to inspire them with a dread of the ambition of his rival. But after some indecisive acts of hostility, Octavius and Antony, finding their parties very nearly balanced, judged it for the present to be their most prudent scheme to unite their interests, and to admit into their association Lepidus, who then enjoyed the government of Transalpine Gaul. Thus was formed the second triumvirate, the effects of whose union were beyond measure dreadful. Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus held a conference in a small island in the middle of the river Po. They agreed that, under the title of Triumviri, they should possess themselves of absolute authority; and they made a partition on the spot

of all the provinces, and divided between them the command of the legions. Lepidus had Gallia Narbonensis and Spain: Antony had Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul; Octavius contented himself with Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia. None of them ventured to appropriate to himself Italy; because they affected to regard that country as the *communis patria*, which they were all equally bound to protect and defend. The eastern provinces were as yet possessed by Brutus and the other conspirators, against whom it was determined that Antony and Octavius should immediately march with a large army.

Before entering, however, upon this expedition, it was resolved to clear the way by a proscription of all that were obnoxious to any one of the triumviri: a dread resolution! since the firmest friends of any one of the three had necessarily been the enemies of the others. What souls must those men have possessed who could advise or consent to so horrible a scheme! Lepidus agreed to sacrifice his brother Paulus; Antony, his uncle Lucius Cæsar; Octavius, his guardian Torranus, and his friend Cicero. The latter had been won, by the flattery of Octavius, to espouse his interest by unmasking the ambitious design of Antony to succeed to the power of the dictator; on which occasion, Cicero pronounced his famous Philippics, in imitation of the orations of Demosthenes to rouse the spirit of the Greeks against the designs of the Macedonian tyrant. It was no wonder, then, that Antony should mark this illustrious man as a certain victim of his revenge.

Cicero, who had never been remarkable for



strength of mind, showed more magnanimity on this occasion than he had ever before manifested. When informed that his name was included in the proscription, he yielded at first to the earnest persuasion of his friends, to attempt to save himself by flight: but on being informed that the country was beset by his enemies, so as to leave no chance for his escape, he desired to be carried to one of his own villas. On perceiving the approach of a band of soldiers, who were commissioned to assassinate him, he ordered his litter to be stopped, beheld his murderers with a fixed regard, and stretched out his neck to the blow. A fragment of one of the lost books of Livy gives a striking description of this last scene in the life of Cicero. After judiciously remarking, that amidst all the reverses of fortune which this great man had undergone, it was only on this last occasion that he displayed true magnanimity, the historian adds these words: *Siquis tamen virtutibus vitia pensarit, vir magnus, acer, memorabilis fuit, et in cujus laudes persequendas Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit.\** In this horrible proscription, 300 senators and 3000 Roman knights were put to death in cold blood.

Satiated, at length, with murder, the triumvirate prepared for their expedition against the conspirators. Lepidus remained in Rome, while Antony and Octavius marched against Brutus and Cassius, then in Macedonia. No Roman armies had ever been seen equal in number to

\* "But weighing his great qualities with his failings, he was a great and most able man, to do justice to whose praises would require a second Cicero."

those which were now to decide the fate of the world. Each party led into the field above 100,000 men. They met near the town of Philippi, on the confines of Macedonia. This decisive battle was fought on both sides with the most desperate courage. Brutus was victorious at the head of that division which he commanded; but too rashly pursuing his success, he separated himself from the main body of the army, which in the mean time was vigorously attacked by Antony, and entirely broken. Cassius, ignorant of what had become of Brutus, and believing that all was lost, obliged one of his own freedmen to put him to death. The plan of Brutus, who had come off in safety with a large body of men, was evidently now to avoid a second engagement: but his troops, flushed with their individual success, forced him to come to action, and he was totally defeated. Convinced that the chances of success were now irretrievably gone, and well assured of the fate he had to expect from the conquerors, he chose to deprive his enemies at least of one victim, and, falling on his sword, he died the death of his friend Cassius.

Octavius appears in this decisive action to have behaved in no heroic manner. It was even asserted that he chose to post himself among the baggage in the rear, during the whole time of the engagement; and such a report, even if we suppose it a falsehood, is, at least, a proof that he had not the reputation of valour. Mark Antony had real courage, and after victory displayed that generosity which is ever its attendant; while the former exhibited a cruelty of nature which is the in-

separable companion of cowardice. He caused the most distinguished of the prisoners to be slaughtered before his eyes, and even insulted them in the agonies of death.

The triumvirs were obliged to gratify their troops with very high rewards. To furnish a supply for that necessary purpose, Antony went into Asia, where he levied the most exorbitant contributions from the tributary states. While in Cilicia, he summoned Cleopatra, who, by assassinating her brother, had secured to herself the undivided sovereignty of Egypt, to appear before him, and answer for her conduct in allowing Serapion, her lieutenant in the isle of Cyprus, to send succours to Cassius. The queen came to Tarsus. Her beauty, the splendour of her suite and equipage, and the artful allurements of her manners, made a complete conquest of the triumvir. He forgot glory, ambition, fame, and every thing for Cleopatra. Octavius, meantime, thought of nothing but his own interest and exaltation, to which he regarded the infatuation of Antony as a most happy preparative.

The younger Pompey had taken possession of Sicily, of Sardinia, and Corsica. Octavius now turned his attention to this quarter; but incapable himself of commanding in a military expedition, he employed Marcus Agrippa, a man of uncommon talents, whom he had raised from obscurity to the consulship; and who very speedily compelled Pompey to evacuate Sicily and all his other possessions, and fly into Asia, where he was put to death by the lieutenants of Antony.

Octavius now determined to rid himself of the

partners of his power. Lepidus, a man of an indolent character and no talent, had already lost all credit, even with his own troops. The legions under his command, won by the bribes and promises of Octavius, deserted their general, who, sensible of his own insufficiency, sought permission to retire to Circæum on the Latian coast, where he passed the remainder of his life in quiet obscurity. It has been well remarked of this man, who for some time sustained a high part in the political drama of the times, that he had neither those virtues nor those vices for which the names of men are transmitted with distinction to posterity.

Antony, in the meantime, intoxicated with Eastern luxury and debauchery, was daily sinking in the esteem of his army. In the madness of his passion for Cleopatra, he had proclaimed her queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Africa, and Cælo-Syria; and lavished kingdoms and provinces on the children that were the fruit of her various amours. These shameless proceedings reflected dishonour on the Roman name, and deprived him of the esteem of his best friends: and the imprudent measure he now took in divorcing his wife Octavia, the sister of his colleague, was a justifiable cause for their coming to an open rupture, and appealing to the sword to decide their claim to undivided sovereignty of the empire. Octavius had foreseen this issue, and made formidable preparations, which Antony had supinely neglected. He trusted chiefly to his fleet, and was persuaded by Cleopatra to rest the fortune of the war on a naval engagement, which was fought near Actium

in Epirus. In the heat of the battle, which was maintained for some time with equal spirit, Cleopatra with her Egyptian armament of sixty galleys took to flight; and, what is scarcely conceivable, such was the infatuation of Antony, that he followed her, leaving his fleet to fight for themselves. After a contest of some hours, they yielded to the squadron of Octavius. The army of Antony, which had witnessed this engagement from the land, held out for a few days, in hopes of the return of their commander, but at length seeing their expectation vain, they surrendered to the victor.

The flight of Cleopatra had been attributed by Antony to female timidity; but her subsequent conduct gave full reason to believe it shameful treachery. Octavius pursued the fugitives to Egypt, where Antony, in desperate infatuation, gave himself up entirely to riot and debauchery, still blind to the treacherous character of his paramour, who, in the meantime, was carrying on a secret negotiation with Octavius, on whom she vainly imagined that her personal charms might have such influence as to procure her association in the supreme power and government of the Roman empire. In this view, she surrendered to him the sovereignty of Egypt, while, without positively assenting to her terms, Octavius gave her reason to believe that he was not disinclined to an accommodation that would gratify her utmost ambition.

Meantime Octavius advancing with his army to besiege Pelusium, its governor, instructed by Cleopatra, surrendered the city at discretion, and this

event was followed by the surrender of the Egyptian fleet. The eyes of Antony were at length opened. He plainly saw that he was betrayed. A report which Cleopatra caused to be spread, that she had put an end to her life, hastened the fate of her injured lover, who died by his own hand; and Cleopatra, soon after, discovering that all her arts were lost upon Octavius, who had determined to treat her as a captive, now executed in reality what she had before feigned, and put herself to death by the poison of an asp.

Octavius returned to Italy, sole master of the Roman empire. He owed his elevation to no manly virtue or heroism of character. A concurrence of happy circumstances, the adoption of the great Julius, the weakness of Lepidus, the folly and infatuation of Antony, the treachery of Cleopatra, and, above all, his own address and artifice, were the instruments of his fortune.

At this remarkable period, the end of the commonwealth of Rome, it may be well to suspend for a while our historical narrative, and interpose some brief observations on the general character of Roman education; the state of literature at this period; the predominant tastes and passions of this remarkable people; and the system of their military art.

## CHAPTER III.

On the Genius and National Character of the Romans—  
System of Roman Education—Progress of Literature—  
The Drama—Historians—Poets.

IN the present chapter, we are to attend to those particular circumstances which appear most peculiarly to mark the genius, and to have formed the national character of the Romans.

A virtuous but rigid severity of manners was the characteristic of the Romans under their kings, and during the first ages of the republic. The private life of the citizens was frugal, temperate, and laborious, and it reflected its influence on their public character. The children imbibed from their infancy the highest veneration for their parents, who from the extent of the paternal power among the Romans, had an unlimited authority over their wives, their offspring, and their slaves. It is far from natural to the human mind that the possession of power and authority should form a tyrannical disposition. Where that authority, indeed, has been usurped by violence, its possessor may, perhaps, be tempted to maintain it by tyranny; but where it is either a right dictated by nature, or the easy effect of circumstances and situation, the very consciousness of authority is apt to inspire a beneficence and humanity in the manner of exercising it. Thus we find the an-

cient Romans, although absolute sovereigns in their families, with the *jus vitæ et necis*, the *right of life and death*, over their children, and their slaves, were yet excellent husbands, kind and affectionate parents, humane and indulgent masters. Nor was it until luxury had corrupted the virtuous simplicity of the ancient manners, that this paternal authority, degenerating into tyrannical abuses, required to be abridged in its power, and restrained in its exercise by the enactment of laws.

By an apparent contradiction, so long as the paternal authority was absolute, the slaves and children were happy: when it became weakened and abridged, then it was that its terrors were, from the excessive corruption of manners, most severely felt. Even, however, under the first emperors, the *Patria Potestas* remained in its full force, and the custom of the *patres-familias* sitting at meals with their slaves and children, showed that there still remained some venerable traces of that ancient and virtuous simplicity.\*

Plutarch, in his comparison between Numa and Lycurgus, has bestowed a severe censure on the Roman lawgiver, for his neglecting to establish a system, or to institute any fixed rules for the education of the Roman youth. But the truth is, that although the *laws* prescribed no such system, or general plan of discipline, like those of Sparta, yet there never existed a people who be-

\* "O noctes cœnæque Deûm, quibus ipse, meique  
Ante Larem proprium vescor, vernasque procaces  
Pasco libatis dapibus prout cuique libido est."

HORACE.



stowed more attention on the education of their youth. In the dialogue, "De Oratoribus,"\* attributed by some authors to Tacitus, by others to Quintilian, there is a fine passage which shows in a remarkable manner that extreme care bestowed, even in the earliest infancy, to form the manners and disposition of the Roman children. From this passage we learn, that in the earlier ages of the Roman commonwealth, such was that anxious care bestowed on their children by the Roman matrons—such that jealousy of their receiving any of their earliest impressions from slaves or domestics—that they not only educated their own children, but accounted it an honourable employment to superintend and assist in educating the children of their relations.

Nor was this task of the mother confined only to the years of infancy and boyhood: it extended its influence to the more advanced periods of youth. At a much later period of the Roman history, we are informed by Tacitus, in his "Life of Agricola," that this remarkable man had begun in his youth to pursue too ardently the study of philosophy, but that he was checked by the prudent remonstrances of his mother.†

To inspire that severe and rigid *virtue* which can alone support a democratic form of government, and to inculcate that exclusive love of our

\* Dialogus de Oratoribus, cap. xxviii. "Jampridem suus cuique filius," &c.

† "Memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare, se in primâ juventâ studium philosophiæ ac juris ultra quam concessum Romano ac Senatori haussisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset."—TACITUS, *Agric. Vit.*, c. iv.

country, before which, in their early ages, every private or personal feeling was constrained to bow, was the first and most sacred duty of these noble matrons. The circumstances in which the commonwealth was situated in its earlier ages made this absolutely necessary. It possessed none of those artificial modes of defence so generally employed by the modern nations. The improvements of modern warfare, which substitute skill so often in the place of valour—the fortifications of our modern cities, which render them, in some measure, independent of the personal exertions of those who defend them—had not been introduced amongst this virtuous people. Those refinements, also, in the arts and manufactures which exchange the little enjoyments of private comfort for the higher feelings of public happiness, and even that progress in the sciences, which, however excellent in its general consequences, encourages certainly a spirit of exclusion most uncongenial to public exertion—all these were either unknown or despised in the severer ages of the Roman republic.

Next to this care of the mother, or the female tutor, in instilling the rigid principle of patriotic virtue, a very remarkable degree of attention appears to have been bestowed by the Romans in accustoming their children to correctness of language and purity of expression. Cicero informs us, that the Gracchi were educated *non tam in gremio quam in sermone matris*. And in speaking of Curió, who was one of the best orators of his time, he adds, that without possessing the rules of his art, and without any knowledge of

the laws, he had attained to eminence\* merely from the elegance and purity of his diction.

This attention to the language of children may appear, in these modern days, an absurd and useless refinement. Among the Romans it was not thought so. They were well aware how much the man is influenced by the earliest impressions and habits of infancy. They suspected, and not without just grounds, that they who became familiar with the language and expressions of their slaves, were likely to be initiated also in their vices, and to become reconciled to their ideas of servility and dependence. That *urbanity* upon which this people so much prided themselves in the more advanced periods of the commonwealth, was nothing else than a certain manly elegance which distinguished the Roman citizens from those nations whom they accounted barbarous. This elegance was particularly evinced in their speech and gestures, and it was one of their first objects to form their youth with those qualities in which they most piqued themselves in excelling. To accustom a child to speak in a manly manner is, in fact, no unlikely method of teaching him to act so.† But this attention to the language of their youth had another source among the Romans. It was by the art of eloquence, by the power which that talent gave them over the minds of the people, and the influence which it possessed in the open deliberations of the popu-

\* In Libro de Claris Oratoribus. Al. edit., folio, vol ii. p. 257.

† "Talis hominibus oratio qualis vita."—SENECA *Epist.* 114.

lar assemblies, that the young Romans could alone rise to eminence, to office, and to dignity. History is full of examples of men who, by their excellence in this talent alone, had risen from the lowest condition amongst the plebeians, to the highest rank in the state. To instil, therefore, at an early age, the elements of elocution, and to habituate the youth to those studies properly called *forensic*, was one great object of the Roman education. As an exercise of memory, the children were taught to repeat the laws of the XII Tables, and they were accustomed very early to plead fictitious causes. Plutarch tells us, in his life of the younger Cato, that, among the sports or plays of the Roman children, one was that of pleading causes before a mock tribunal, and accusing and defending a criminal in all the accustomed forms of judicial procedure.

The exercises of the body were likewise particularly attended to. Wrestling, running, boxing, swimming, using the bow and javelin, managing the horse, and, in short, whatever might harden the body and increase its strength and activity, were all reckoned necessary parts of education. Most of these warlike exercises were practised daily in the Campus Martius. The elder Cato not only instructed his son in grammar, and in the study of the law, but taught him also all these athletic accomplishments.

At the age of seventeen, which was the period when the young Roman assumed the *toga virilis*, the youth was committed by his father to the care of one of the masters or public professors of rhetoric, whom he attended constantly to the forum, and

there employed himself in taking notes from the speakers, of whose harangues he afterwards gave an account to his preceptor.

It must not appear extraordinary that this mode of education should have been common to all the young patricians, whether their inclination led them to the camp or to the bar; for as every citizen of Rome was a branch of its legislative system, the profession of arms became no apology for the want of that ability of maintaining the rights of the state in the assemblies of the people, which was equally necessary with the capacity of defending them in the field. If a public officer was accused, it was reckoned shameful if he could not himself give an account of his conduct, and plead his own cause. A senator who could not support his opinion by the ingenuity of argument or the force of eloquence, was an object of contempt to the people. "*Parum fuit in senatu breviter censere, nisi qui ingenio et eloquentia sententiam suam teneretur; disertum haberi, pulchrum et gloriosum, sed contra mutum et elinguem videri deforme habebatur.*" But it was not alone the cultivation of eloquence which was esteemed a necessary part of education. It was reckoned dishonourable for any person of the patrician rank not to have thoroughly studied the laws and the constitution of his country. In one of the laws of the Roman Pandects, an anecdote is recorded of Sulpitius, a gentleman of the patrician order, who had occasion to resort for advice to Quintus Mucius Scævola, then the most eminent lawyer in Rome. Though otherwise an

accomplished orator, Sulpitius had neglected the study of the law, and, from ignorance of the technical terms, he did not comprehend the meaning of Scævola's opinion; upon which he received from the lawyer this memorable reproof, "that it was a shame for a patrician, a nobleman, and an orator, to be ignorant of that law in which he was so particularly concerned." Sulpitius felt the reproach, and applied himself to the study of jurisprudence, in which he became so eminent as in Cicero's opinion to excel Scævola himself.\*

To be an accomplished gentleman, therefore, it was necessary among the Romans to be an accomplished lawyer and orator; and what were the requisites for attaining eminence in those departments we may learn from the writings of Cicero, Quintilian, and the younger Pliny. The pains those illustrious men bestowed to arrive at that excellence which distinguished them, to those bred up in the less laborious efforts of modern literature, appear almost incredible. Pliny, in speaking of his public orations, which he always committed to writing, describes thus the labour of their revision:—"Nullum emendandi genus omitto; ac primum quæ scripsi mecum ipse pertracto; deinde duobus aut tribus lego, mox aliis trado adnotanda, notasque eorum si dubito cum uno rursus aut altero pensito; novissimè pluribus recito; ac si quid mihi credis acerrime emendo; cogito quam sit magnum dare aliquid in manus hominum, nec persuadere mihi possum non et

\* Digest. lib. i. tit. ii. sec. 43.

cum multis et sæpe tractandum quod placere et semper et omnibus cupias."\*

Such were the pains bestowed by Pliny to attain the character of an accomplished writer—a degree of industry, however, for which he does not seem to claim any extraordinary merit as for a labour uncommon amongst the authors of his time. On the contrary, the same author, speaking of the studies of his uncle the elder Pliny, modestly styles himself an indolent man, when compared to that prodigy of industry and application, with the manner of whose singular life we shall become more intimately acquainted when treating of the state of *philosophy* among the Romans.

When an attention to rhetoric and the art of composition was thus once introduced, the progress of general literature in the Roman republic was singularly rapid; and it may here be an object of pleasing as well as of useful investigation, to attempt a brief delineation of the progress of literature amongst this remarkable people, from its earliest stages to its highest advancement; shortly remarking, as we proceed, the peculiar genius and character of the principal authors who

\* "I neglect no possible mode of correction and emendation; and in the first place, after I have written an oration, I carefully revise it by myself; I then read it over to two or three friends; afterwards I submit it to others for their annotations, and if I doubt the justice of their criticisms, I canvass them with each; lastly, I recite the oration to a large assembly of my friends; and, believe, even after this, I carefully reconsider and revise it. I hold it no light matter to come before the public; nor can I persuade myself that less pains are requisite on the part of an orator who aims at general and lasting approbation."

have become distinguished under its different eras. Superficial, certainly, and imperfect every account of this kind must be, from that brevity which the nature of our plan demands.

The poetical spirit appears almost coeval with the very rudest condition of society. Other branches of human knowledge which have arisen in the gradual progress of improvement, have owed their origin to the wandering and adventurous spirit of the species, or to the wants and sufferings of mankind: but poetry seems to have been created with man, and is contemporaneous with his language; and, what is more remarkable, it is in this early age that poetry often assumes its highest character, and arrives at its greatest perfection.

*Language* in the early periods of every nation is in a very rude condition, and it is in this imperfection and apparent barrenness of the language that we shall find one cause for the lofty tone assumed by the poetry. The words are few, but they are invariably expressive. They are descriptive of the strongest passions, of the deepest feelings of the human heart, of patriotism and valour, of grief and joy, of triumph and despair, of love and hatred;—of such feelings as are to be found amongst every uncultivated people—when nature is certainly comparatively in a savage state; but when none of those fantastic and artificial ideas, and therefore none of those low and insipid expressions have been introduced, which invariably accompany the process of luxury and refinement. In the ancient languages of a rude people we find no redundancy of expletives, no unnecessary words, no unmeaning synonymes; because language is



formed to describe what passes in the minds, or before the eyes of those who use it. Even in their common discourse, and still more in their war songs, or their solemn harangues, the speakers were actually compelled to be nervous, concise, and frequently metaphorical. The high-flown and figurative style must have then become as much a matter of necessity, owing to the barrenness of the language, as the effect of taste or imagination. When man first found himself in society, the Almighty, in the language which he created for him, did not furnish him with what was calculated to delineate the minuter feelings of the heart, or the more detailed and delicate scenery of nature; but with that broad and bolder pencil which could describe those conflicting passions which then tore his mind, or those awful solitudes with which he was then surrounded.

In the infancy of any people, and consequently in the infancy of their language, we must also recollect that there are none of those arbitrary rules of composition, which the progress of literature has introduced. The effect of these is often to trammel the flights of genius, and often to shelter the efforts of mediocrity. Those in the community of moderate genius, or comparatively lower talents, are encouraged to intrude their minor efforts into notice, whilst the retired spirits, whose genius and talents fitted them for a higher course, will not stoop to such unequal competition.

There is yet one other cause of the excellence of early poetry, which, before proceeding to that of the Romans, we may very briefly notice: I mean that which is generally to be found in the charac-

ter and habits of the poet himself, and in the circumstance of their poems having been addressed to the whole body of the people. A moment's reflection will show that these two circumstances must, in a great measure, form the style of the national poetry, and, of course, regulate the tone of the national taste.

In reading the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, who is there that will not discover that he is perusing the poetry of a warrior, who feels, in the memory of the battles in which he has fought, the full force of his own energetic descriptions; who lived in the midst of the scenery which he paints from, and who addressed himself not to any particular set of men who regulated the public taste, not to the senate, to the academy, or the camp alone, but directed his efforts to the great body of the Athenian people, from whose feelings, and whose taste, he looked for his proudest and most lasting applause? When we dwell with enthusiasm on the sublimity of the Scandinavian sages, or the eloquence of the North American warriors, we are tracing the very same effects produced by the same causes above enumerated. The poets lived and wrote in the midst of that sublime scenery from which they drew their noblest pictures; they were themselves free, and they felt deeply the passions which agitate the mind in the ruder periods of society, and they addressed their equals in the body of the people, who knew well how to distinguish their errors, and appreciate their success.

The history of this delightful art, in ancient as well as in more modern times, will, as we trace its future progress, be found to exemplify in a strik-

ing manner the truth of these remarks. Among all nations, as has been said, the first dawning of the literary spirit is shown in poetical compositions. The Roman warrior, like the Indian or the Gothic, had his war-songs, which celebrated his sagacity in council and his triumphs in the field. But none of these relics of the first Roman poetry have reached our days. After the establishment of a closer political union, and the introduction of a national religion, if the nation subsists, as in the early ages of Rome, by agriculture, their poetry assumes a new character. The verses in praise of the gods, whom they believed to preside over the year, and to regulate the fruitfulness of the seasons, and the rude but joyful songs which commemorated the close of the harvest, were examples of this second style. These last are particularly mentioned by Livy, under the name of the *Versus Fescennini*, which were sung alternately by the labourers, and which were composed in a strain of rude and mirthful poetry, but not unsparingly tinged with ribaldry and licentiousness.

About the 390th year of Rome, the city had been reduced to extreme distress by a pestilence, and an uncommon method was adopted to appease the wrath of the gods, in sending into Etruria for drolls or stage-dances. The dances of these Etrurians, according to Livy, were not ungraceful, and the Roman youth readily learnt to imitate their performances, adding to them their own *Fescennine* ballads, which they recited to the sound of music, with appropriate gestures. Here evidently was the first rise of dramatic performances amongst the Romans; but, as yet, all was rude and imper-

fect, and they were altogether ignorant of the regular structure of a dramatic composition. This they acquired the first idea of from the Greeks. Euripides and Sophocles had flourished nearly 160 years, and Menander above 50 years, before this period. The dramatic poem was, at this time, in the highest celebrity in Greece, and was at length, about the year of Rome 514, introduced into that commonwealth by Livius Andronicus, a Greek slave.

To Livius Andronicus, whose compositions, in the judgment of Cicero, did not merit a second perusal, succeeded Nævius and Ennius.\* Nævius, probably, only imitated and improved upon

\* Ennius was a genius of very uncommon powers from nature, and these he had improved by an intimate acquaintance with Greek literature. He composed, in hexameter verse, the "Annals of the Punic War;" a poem on Scipio; a book of Epigrams or Inscriptions; and above forty dramatic pieces in Iambic verse; of all these, nothing but a few fragments remain. Like most original geniuses, he was abundantly conscious of his own merits, as appears from the inscription he composed for a statue of himself:—

"Aspice, O cives, senis Ennii imaginis formam.

Hic vestrum pinxit maxima facta patrum.

Nemo me lacrimis decoret, neque funera fletu

Faxit. Cur? volito viva per ora virum."

The following picturesque description of the dead of night, by Ennius, is the production of a sublime imagination:—

"Mundus cœli vastus constitit silentio,

Et Neptunus sævus undis asperis pausam dedit,

Sol equis iter repressit ungulis volantibus;

Consistere Amnes perennes, arbores vento vacant."

There are many beautiful single lines to be found scattered amongst the fragments which have reached our time, but few perfect passages.

the rude compositions of Andronicus; but *Ennius* was the first who, as *Lucretius* tells us, deserved a lasting crown from the Muses:—

“———— *Ennius qui primus amæno*  
*Detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam.*” \*

The fragments of *Ennius* which have come down to our time illustrate strongly the observations which we have above made on the character of the early poetical productions of most rude nations. His poetry is bold and energetic; his sentiments often noble; his diction careless but vigorous; his versification rude and imperfect: he trusted to his genius for his future fame, and left the niceties of art and versification to his more polished descendants. One of these has finely drawn his character in a single line:—

“*Ennius ingenio maximus, arte rudis.*”

*OVID. Trist. book ii. v. 452.*

From the time of *Ennius*, dramatic poetry made a rapid advancement; for the intercourse with Greece, after the Punic wars, had an almost immediate effect in promoting the literary spirit, which first evinced itself in the improvement of the drama.

“*Post Punica bella quietus quærere cepit,*  
*Quid Sophocles et Thespis et Æschylus utile ferrent.*”

Then arose *Plautus*, the first who may be said to have proposed to himself nature as his model, but nature in so low and coarse an aspect as to make us feel often more disgusted than delighted with the vulgar fidelity of his pictures. It is, indeed, some-

\* “*Ennius, who robb'd the Heliconian fount*  
*Of the first bays to deck his honour'd front.*”

thing like a profanation of the name of nature, to believe that those authors who have studied in the very lowest school of vice and profligacy, who have copied human manners in their most degraded condition, have had nature for their model. These observations are particularly applicable to the dramatic works of Plautus, who has described nature not as she really was, but as transfigured by the vice and impurity of man. The general Latinity of Plautus is nervous and concise. It is pure, it is sometimes, perhaps, elegant, when we understand purity in opposition to the being florid or figurative; but it is too crowded with Græcisms, and the wit is too coarse and licentious, not to reflect somewhat of the same character on the style.

It is unfortunate that we have no remains of the dramatic works of Cæcilius, an author who improved so highly on the comedy of Plautus, that Cicero declares him perhaps the best of the comic writers.

Terence made his first appearance when Cæcilius was at the height of his reputation. It is said that, when he offered his first play to the ædiles, they sent him with it to Cæcilius for his judgment of the piece. Cæcilius was then at supper; and, as the young bard was very meanly dressed, he was desired to sit behind on a low stool, and to read his composition. Scarcely, however, had he read a few sentences, when Cæcilius desired him to approach, and placed him at the table next to himself. His reputation arose at once to such a height, that his "Eunuchus," on its first

appearance, was publicly performed twice each day.\*

There is in the comedy of Terence a tone of truth and nature which distinguishes all its parts. It is discernible in the general simplicity of the plot, in the feelings and sentiments of his characters, in the perfect purity and familiar elegance of his language. But what Terence wanted was that strong command of ludicrous imagery, that *vis comica*, or comic energy, which is frequently to be traced in Plautus.

There were four different species of comedy among the Romans:—the *Comœdia Togata*, or *Prætextata*; the *Comœdia Tabernaria*; the *Atellanæ*; and the *Mimi*. The *Togata* or *Prætextata* admitted serious personages, and was probably of the nature of the modern sentimental comedy. The comedies of Terence may probably be numbered in this class. The *Comœdia Tabernaria* was a representation of ordinary life, and had nothing of dignity in its composition, though it did not descend to buffoonery. The *Comœdiæ Atellanæ* were pieces which were not committed to writing. The actors had the outlines of the comedy prescribed to them, and the subject of the different scenes; but they filled up the dialogue from their own imaginations, in the same manner as in the pieces of Italian

\* Terence was cotemporary with Scipio and Lælius, and is said to have owed a great deal to their conversation and critical advice. Nay, Cicero tells us that it was rumoured that some of those comedies which pass under the name of Terence were actually written by Scipio and Lælius, particularly the "Heauton-Timroumenos," and the "Adelphi."

comedy performed at Paris in the last century. This species of representation, as it requires more true genius in the actor than any other department of dramatic performance, was appropriated to the higher classes of the Roman youth, who would not permit the ordinary comedians to attempt it.

The Mimi have been particularly described in an earlier part of this work, in treating of the state of the dramatic art amongst the Greeks. They consisted of pieces of comedy of the very lowest species, more properly farces or entertainments of buffoonery, from which all dignity, and not unfrequently all decorum, was banished; yet as the desire of variety in the compositions of art will excite to new experiments, we find the Roman actors would, in the middle of the performance of a mimus, surprise and delight their audience by some unexpected stroke of the pathetic. The Roman tragedy had arrived, we are informed by some authors, at a very high pitch of excellence, more particularly in the works of Attius and Pacuvius. Of these, unfortunately, not a vestige has been preserved, and all of this species of poetry which have reached our time, are some very indifferent tragedies published under the name of Seneca.

We see from this short review of the origin of literature amongst the Romans, that its earliest efforts were exclusively confined to dramatic composition.\*

\* Some of the Roman actors were men of the most respectable character. *Æsopus* was the Garrick of Rome, and enjoyed, like him, the countenance and friendship of the most respectable men of his country. He excelled in



The Romans, in a word, borrowed their literature from Greece, and first attempted the species of literature then most popular in Greece; if, indeed, their Plautus and Terence, and the rest, did more than translate or adapt the then most popular pieces of the Greek stage. It was not until the golden age of Augustus, that by the revolutions which then took place in the public taste, the other high departments of literature were introduced at Rome. It has been observed by Paterculus, that the era of the perfection of Roman literature was the age of Cicero, but this he extends to take in all those authors of the preceding age whom Cicero might have seen, and all the succeeding period who might have seen him. But the era of the highest literary splendour amongst the Romans was, in truth, not of such long duration. It continued above a century. We shall

tragedy, and was in this department the most celebrated actor that had ever appeared on the Roman stage. Cicero experienced the advantages of his friendship and talents, during his exile; for, Æsopus being engaged in a part wherein there were several passages that might be applied to Cicero's misfortunes, this excellent tragedian pronounced them with so peculiar and affecting an emphasis, that the whole audience immediately took up the allusion, and it had a better effect, as Cicero himself acknowledges, than anything his own eloquence could have expressed for the same purpose. But it is not in this instance alone that Cicero was obliged to Æsopus, as it was by the advantage of his precepts and example that he laid the foundation of his oratorical fame, and improved himself in the art of elocution. The high value which the Romans set upon the talents of this pathetic actor appears by the immense estate which he acquired in his profession: he died worth nearly 200,000*l*. He left a son behind him, whose remarkable extravagance is recorded by Horace, Sat. 3, b. ii. v. 239.

take a brief review of the most celebrated both of the prose and poetic writers, beginning with the former.

Pliny, Cicero, and Quintilian have all spoken in very high terms of the writings of the elder Cato. His principal works were historical, but of these nothing remains. Many of his fragments, however, have come down to us, and of these the most entire are some of his treatise "*De Re Rusticâ*," in which he was imitated by Varro, one of the earliest of the good writers amongst the Romans.

The works of Varro were extremely voluminous. They consisted of many treatises on subjects of morals, politics, and natural history; of these only his books "*De Re Rusticâ*" have reached the present time, and these are chiefly valuable, not for any particular merit attaching either to the style or to the composition, but for their curious and accurate details on the subject of Roman agriculture.\*

Amongst the most eminent prose writers, Salust, in point of time, comes next to Varro. As to the matter of his writings, they have been, both by his own age, and by the judgment of the present day, declared excellent. There is to be discerned in them a depth of judgment, a shrewdness of remark resulting from his accurate knowledge of

\* Cicero however, speaks highly of the other works of Varro. "*Tu ætatem patriæ, tu descriptiones temporum, tu sacrorum jura, tu sacerdotum, tu domesticam, tu bellicam disciplinam, tu sedem regionum, locorum, tu omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum, nomina, genera, officia, causas aperuisti.*"

human nature, and an admirable talent for the delineation of character, which are all qualifications eminently requisite in a good historian. But in regard to the manner adopted in his works, it is impossible to speak favourably. In his anxiety to imitate the energetic brevity of Thucydides, he has fallen into an overstrained conciseness of expression, an affectation of uncommon idioms, and a studied adoption of antiquated phraseology, which render his style frequently obscure, and always unnatural. This is the more unpardonable, as he lived in those times in which the Roman language was in its highest purity. All imitations in style are objectionable, and indicate a servility and littleness of mind rarely found united to real talent. But to imitate in one language the peculiar idiom or particular style of any favourite author who writes in another, is, of all imitations, the most unnatural, and the least likely to be attended with success.

Infinitely superior to the manner of writing which we find in Sallust, is that of Cæsar. Endowed by nature with what we may truly term genius, this extraordinary man was destined to excel in everything to which he turned the powers of his mind. Unrivalled in military enterprise, of first-rate talents as a public speaker, engrossed incessantly in those various and agitating occupations which attend the life of an active general and intriguing politician, he still found time to compose those celebrated Commentaries, which in their own style as military annals, have never been excelled. To require in the writings of Cæsar those qualifications which we look for in the

graver productions of a professed historian, would be to mistake entirely the character of the work. Composed in the midst of the bustle of a camp, and written probably in those few hurried hours which fill up the intervals occurring in military operations, they aim at no higher merit than that of being a faithful delineation of his campaigns in Gaul. As such, in that interest which is created by the talents and success of their author, as well as in perspicuity of narration and elegance and purity of style, they have ever remained unrivalled.

Different from any of the prose writers above spoken of, but combining more excellent virtues than are to be found in them all, was Titus Livius, the Father, as he has been called, of Roman history. Of one hundred and forty books which he had completed, only thirty-five have reached our time. There is certainly to be found in this writer a gravity, it might almost be called a majesty, throughout his narration—a sagacity in his remarks, although not frequently intruded—and a finished eloquence in the speeches not unsparingly scattered through his history, which countenance, in a great degree, those high eulogiums which Quintilian, and, in a later age, Casaubon, have pronounced on him. There is not, indeed, to be found amongst the Greeks any historian, who with equal political judgment, perspicuity of arrangement, and a happy selection of the most important facts, possesses so wonderful an eloquence of expression.\*

In the decline of Roman literature, we find

\* *May*, our old English poet, in his tragedy of *Agrippina*, has the following beautiful eulogium of historical com-

many historians—but amongst these, few of great character; yet Tacitus alone would suffice to make the age he belonged to illustrious in literature. This great writer, however, (although his merits as an historian have been universally acknowledged,) has some prominent faults. In the narrative of those great events with which his history is occupied, he ascribes too much to the operation of deep and artful schemes of policy. His ingenious and intriguing mind is ever restlessly searching in the regions of conjecture for some dark or mysterious motive of conduct, ascribing too little to the influence of more simple and apparent causes, and eager to grasp at every shadow of a reason, provided it be sufficiently uncommon or unnatural. Too often mere probabilities are stated as demonstratively certain, and bare conjectures assume the tone of decided truths. In addition to this obscurity, in the matter resulting from a desire of being more than commonly acute, in accounting for even the most trifling events, there is in Tacitus an unnecessary brevity and mysteriousness of style, which reminds us sometimes of the same affectation in Sallust. It is by no means to be wondered at that an position, which cannot be applied to any author with more propriety than to Livy.

“ His style is full and princely,  
Stately and absolute beyond whate’er  
These eyes have seen; and Rome, whose majesty  
Is there described, in after times shall owe  
For her memorial to that learned pen  
More than to all those fading monuments  
Built with the riches of the spoiled world.”

author whose train of thought is so uncommon, and whose language is generally so concise, should not unfrequently require a considerable effort to be understood at all. And it would be well if all authors would recollect that they are writing for posterity, as well as for their own age; that their works, if intrinsically valuable, will be read when time shall have deprived future nations of that deep and critical knowledge of the language in which they were written which belongs to their cotemporaries; and, therefore, that the most simple and unambiguous style will ever be the most lasting. Still, however, Tacitus is, in many respects, an unrivalled historian; and it is the effect even of that fault above mentioned, that few have ever penetrated with more acuteness into the secret springs of human policy, or developed with more sagacity the causes of great events.

Let us now attend to the character and merits of the most celebrated of the Roman poets.

In addition to the dramatists whom we have already adverted to, the only poets who wrote during the period of the commonwealth were Lucretius and Tibullus. A philosophic poem is, of all literary productions, the least likely to be successful; and Lucretius, so far as his philosophy is concerned, is ponderous and verbose in his expression, perplexed in his meaning, rugged in his versification. He had in him, however, the materials of a true poet; and not unfrequently, where he has shaken himself loose of his unfortunate subject, he rises into passages of uncommon bril-

liancy. But the misfortune is, that that luxuriance of imagination which is the very soul of poetry, is raving and impertinence when applied to philosophy. The cardinal de Polignac, in his "Anti-Lucretius;" Buchanan, in his poem "De Sphærâ;" and Darwin, in his various botanical, mechanical, and philosophic rhapsodies, have all strongly corroborated the truth of this observation. All of them—and in no common degree the first—have scattered throughout the rugged materials of their works the real gems of poetry; all of them evince what they could have been by splendid passages; but all of them have been tied down, by the nature of their subject, to a species of dry ratiocination, or of tedious particularity, which is either too dull to be convincing, or too detailed to be poetical. Lucretius himself, perhaps, owes his IMMORTALITY to some two or three hundred glorious lines, altogether parenthetical as regards his main design.

Catullus was the cotemporary of Lucretius. The characteristics of his poetry, which consisted of odes, epigrams, and idylliums, (and which was entirely formed on the model of the Greek school,) appear to be a learned purity of diction, a certain elegance and suavity in his sentences, a virulent and biting strain of satire, and, in his amatory pieces, a voluptuous and highly-coloured imagery, which too often degenerates into broad licentiousness.

In the succeeding age of Augustus, the poetic genius of the Romans attained to the pitch of its highest elevation. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and

Tibullus, were all cotemporaries; and it may be safely asserted that these poets, in their several departments, were never equalled in any of the succeeding ages of the empire.

To offer here a minute criticism upon the poetry of Virgil would be both unnecessary and impertinent. Every one, on this head, has read, thought, and felt for himself. Rising into the sublime in many places where his subject naturally demands it, tender and pathetic in others, where the situation of his characters calls necessarily for these touches; luxuriant yet terse in his descriptions of scenery; grave, moral, and eloquent in his sentiments, and, at the same time, combining and regulating all these uncommon excellencies by the utmost purity and correctness of taste, it was impossible but that the poet, who united in himself such various and uncommon powers, should have formed the admiration of his own, and the model to succeeding ages.

Horace, the friend and cotemporary of Virgil, is to be considered in three different lights—as a lyric poet, a satirist, and a critic. In all he is excellent. In his odes, he has greater *variety* than any of his Greek predecessors appear to have attained; and he has probably equalled the most of them in their several departments. The great charm, however, is in the varied turn of his expressions, that *curiosa felicitas* (to use a term of Petronius) which no other lyric poet has ever reached. His satires, on the other hand, possess a gentlemanlike slyness and obliquity of censure which distinguish



them *toto cælo* from the keen and cutting sarcasm of Juvenal.\*

As a critic, the rules which Horace has given are almost entirely borrowed from Aristotle; but he has arranged them with that acute and admirable judgment, and illustrated them with that aptitude of imagery which are conspicuous in the rest of his poetical compositions.

Ovid is the next and last of that constellation of poets which formed the honour of the Augustan age. In what we term *genius*, he is decidedly inferior both to Virgil and Horace. He is deficient in grandeur of conception, in simplicity of expression, and in that high-wrought and ardent imagination which is the accompaniment of the more lofty kinds of genius. But if he wants all this, he possesses still many excellences. His invention is astonishing: in variety of story, in ingenuity of connexion, in the profusion and facility of his versification, he cannot be surpassed. He is, in these respects, a kind of Ariosto amongst the ancients. But even these great qualities have led him into errors. He is generally too diffuse to be grand or forcible—too particular, too much a lover of the detail of description, ever to reach the sublime. He is, in the words of Quintilian, *nimum amator sui ingenii*—too fond of his own

\* To form a just estimate of the comparative merits of Juvenal and Horace as satirists, we have only to compare those satires where the two poets profess to treat the same topics, as the eighth of Juvenal with the sixth of the 1st Book of Horace, where the subject is a discussion on true nobility, or the tenth of Juvenal with the first of the 1st Book of Horace.

ingenuity. His learning becomes often tedious, his narration prolix, his invention puerile. He possesses, in short, more of those minor qualifications which are necessary to constitute a true poet than any of his cotemporaries: he can be tender, harmonious, pathetic, and sometimes eloquent; but if he is ever great, it is only in a few insulated passages, which are scattered through his works. It is more, perhaps, the effect of chance or of imitation than of that steady ray of genius which illuminates the nobler work of his friend and cotemporary Virgil.

The elegies of Tibullus are elegant, but generally insipid. They never offend, but they seldom move; he is a pleasing, but not an original poet, and, owing to an extreme poverty of fancy, he is constantly pacing the same beaten track, *eodem pæne gyro concluditur*.

The last of the Roman poets whom we may call truly excellent in his own department is *Martial*. The sense which the ancients appear to have affixed to the term "epigram" appears to have been very different from its common acceptation in the present day. By epigram we generally understand some happy or amusing conceit, some sudden ebullition of wit, or humour, expressed in a short and sententious distich. According to the meaning of the ancients, however, there was no limitation as to these qualities. Any happy turn of thought, whether playful or serious, expressed in poetical language, was denominated an epigram. It is for this reason that, amongst the Anthologies of the Greeks, we meet with epigrams which are alternately written in a jocose or serious strain,

and which, if they are often smart and humorous, are as frequently tender and pathetic. Such is in truth the real character of the Epigrams of Martial; and the execution of these, to whatever class they belong, is for the most part peculiarly happy. Yet he has many faults. His ingenuity and quickness have often betrayed him into overstrained and artificial conceits. Conscious of a peculiar talent in discerning remote, though often ludicrous analogies, he is ever too anxious to display this. He plays too much upon the sense, and puns too frequently on the sound and meaning of his words; and he has that unpardonable fault, so common to the age in which he wrote, of introducing an obscenity and licentiousness into his verses, which, although it recommended them to that degraded people for whom he wrote, is fortunately too gross to produce any serious mischief, or to create any other feeling than that of disgust.

The first symptom of the corruption of writing is a species of false and inflated style, a luxuriance of ornament, and a fondness for quaint and pointed terms of expression. This was discernible even in Martial. When these succeed to, or rather usurp, the place of the chaste, manly, and simple mode of expression—of that style which attends more to the sense which it conveys, than to the terms or manner in which it is constructed, it is a certain indication of the decay of a just and genuine taste. Even in the end of the reign of Augustus, poetry seems to have been rather on the decline; and in the succeeding age, if we except the compositions of Martial and Juvenal, nature and simplicity had almost entirely given

place to bombast and affectation. Although in Lucan we find some scattered examples of genuine poetic imagery, and in Persius several happy strokes of keen and animated satire, yet they hardly repay the trouble of wading through the unnatural fustian of the one, or the affected obscurity of the other—who, however, we should remember, wrote the pieces which remain to us, in early youth.

## CHAPTER IV.

## Roman Philosophy—Public and Private Manners.

IN the present chapter I shall consider, in the first place, the state of philosophy amongst the Romans, and afterwards proceed to the subject of their public and private manners. In the early ages of the republic, the Romans, occupied in continual wars with the states of Italy, or, in the short intervals of respite from these, engrossed in their domestic dissensions, had little leisure to bestow on the cultivation of the sciences, and had no idea of philosophical speculation. It was not till the end of the sixth century, after the building of the city, and in the interval between the war with Perseus of Macedon and the third Punic war, that philosophy made its first appearance at Rome. A number of Achaians, banished from their native country, had settled in Italy. Part of these, amongst whom were some men of talents and learning, particularly Polybius the Megalopolitan, took up their abode at Rome, and, applying themselves there to the pursuit of letters and the education of the Roman youth, soon diffused a relish for these studies hitherto unknown to the rising republic. This new taste was, as I have hinted at in the former chapter, very unfavourably regarded by the older citizens. The senators, who lived in a perpetual struggle with a people jealous of their

civil rights, were in no measure disposed to encourage philosophical disquisitions on the origin of government, on the foundation of liberty, and the natural rights of mankind. To repress, therefore, such dangerous studies, this body passed a decree, banishing those foreign philosophers from their city. This, however, was an ineffectual remedy. The passion for literature may perhaps be cherished by political encouragements, but once roused, it is not easily extinguished by political restraints. A few years after this, Carneades and Critolaus arrived in an Athenian embassy at Rome; the discourses of these philosophers added new strength and vigour to that taste whose first efforts the Roman senate had in vain attempted to extinguish, and the Greek philosophy soon became as generally relished in this era of the republic, as during its earliest ages it had been either unknown or despised.

It was natural that, in the choice among the different systems which the several sects or schools of Greek philosophy presented, those tenets should be most favourably received and most generally adopted, which accorded most with the national character and genius of the people. The Romans had not yet shaken off the severity of ancient manners, and the doctrines of the Stoical philosophy, were, therefore, most nearly allied to their own previous conceptions of morality. The philosophy of Aristotle was, in truth, little known in Rome till the age of Cicero. Cratippus then taught his system with great reputation, though the unnecessarily tedious and complicated mode of reasoning adopted by this philosopher does not appear ever to have

had a numerous party to support it. Lucullus whose stay in Greece afforded him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the doctrines of all the different schools, at his return to Rome disseminated a very general taste for philosophizing. He does not, indeed, appear to have attached himself exclusively to the tenets of any particular sect. If he had a preference for any, it was for that of Plato. The philosophy of the New Academy, which professed to teach the art of defending all opinions, would necessarily find its partisans among the lawyers and orators. Cicero, if he professed any settled system at all, (a point which his philosophical writings leave very enigmatical,) seems most attached to this.

The truth probably is, that, in his philosophical works, his general purpose was to give rather a history of the ancient philosophy, than any defence or exposition of his own peculiar opinions; to explain to his countrymen in their own language whatever the philosophers of all sects and all ages had taught, with a view towards the enlargement of their understanding, and the improving of their morals. This he declares to be his purpose in his "Treatise de Finibus," in that "De Naturâ Deorum," in his "Tusculan Disputations," and in his book on the Academic Philosophy. As to physics, or natural philosophy, Cicero seems to have entertained the same opinion with Socrates—that a minute and particular attention to these inquiries was a study rather curious than useful, and contributing but little to the real benefit of mankind—a very extraordinary idea, but which seems to have been prevalent with most of the ancient

philosophers, if we except Aristotle and the elder Pliny. It was reserved for our own country, in a future and more enlightened age of the world, to lay, in this severe and critical examination of nature, which was then so much despised, the solid basis of all true and genuine philosophy. Of the writings and principles of Aristotle, a particular account has been given in treating of the progress of philosophy amongst the Greeks. Nothing need here be added upon this subject. The elder Pliny, whose books on natural history still remain entire, was perhaps one of the most extraordinary literary phenomena that ever existed in the world. In one of the letters of his nephew, Pliny the younger, there is an account given of the studies, and a description of the manner of life of this singular man, which, as it is extremely curious, I shall easily be excused for inserting.

"You admire," says Pliny to Macer, "the works of my uncle, and wish to have a complete collection of them; I will point out to you the order in which they were composed: for, however immaterial that may seem, it is a sort of information not at all unacceptable to men of letters. The first book he published was a treatise concerning the art of throwing the Javelin on Horseback. This he wrote when he commanded a troop of horse, and it is drawn up with great accuracy and judgment. He next published the "Life of Pomponius Secundus," in two books, and after that, the "History of the Wars in Germany," in twenty books, in which he gave an account of all the battles we had been engaged in against that nation; and a "Treatise upon Eloquence," divided into six books. In this



work he takes the orator from his cradle, and leads him up till he has carried him to the highest point of perfection in his art. In the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in any studies of a more free and elevated nature, he published a piece of criticism in eight books, concerning Ambiguity in Expression. He completed the history which Aufidius Bassus left unfinished, and added to it thirty books; and lastly, he has left thirty-seven books of natural history, a work of great compass and learning, and almost as various as Nature herself. You will wonder how a man so engaged as he was could find time to compose so many books; but your surprise will rise still higher, when you hear that for some time he engaged in the profession of an advocate; that he died in his fifty-sixth year; and that from the time of his quitting the bar till his death, he was employed in the execution of the highest employments, and in the service of his prince. But he had a quick apprehension, joined to unwearied application. Before day-break he used to wait upon Vespasian, who like him chose that time to transact his business. When he had finished the affairs which the emperor committed to his charge, he returned home to his studies. After a short repast at noon, he would repose himself in the sun, during which time some author was read to him, from which, according to his constant custom, he made extracts and observations. When this was over, he generally took the cold bath, after that, a slight refreshment, and then reposed himself a little. Then, as if beginning a new day, he

immediately resumed his studies till supper time, during which, a book was commonly read to him, upon which he would make occasional remarks. In summer, he rose from supper by day-light, and in winter, as soon as it was dark. Such was his manner of life, amidst the hurry and noise of the town; but in the country, his whole time was devoted to study without intermission, excepting when in the bath, for even when undressing, and when he was rubbed by his servants, he was either listening to a reader, or dictating himself. A secretary constantly attending him in his chariot. I remember he once reproved me for walking. 'You might,' says he 'employ those hours to more advantage;' for he thought all time was lost which was not given to study. By this extraordinary application, he found time to write so many volumes. I cannot but smile," continues the younger Pliny, "when I hear myself called a studious man, who, in comparison to him, am a mere loiterer. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits by numberless affairs both public and private? Even they whose whole lives are engaged in study must blush when placed in the same view with him."

This picture of the manner of life pursued by the elder Pliny will be allowed by all to be a very singular one, but it is too inconsistent with the ordinary powers of man to serve as a model of imitation. It will appear also from this, that Pliny was infinitely more studious of storing his mind with the opinions of others than to form opinions of his own; for one who is constantly employed, either in listening to a reader, or in dic-

tating to an amanuensis, cannot possibly give sufficient exercise either to his judgment or his invention. And this, indeed, appears to have been the case with Pliny, if we may judge from the only work of his remaining, "The Books of Natural History," which is, indeed, little else than a most voluminous compilation from the works of Varro, the elder Cato, Hyginus, Pomponius Mela, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Herodotus, and other writers—a work valuable, no doubt, as containing an immense treasury of the knowledge of the ancients, but filled with discordant and contradictory opinions, and indicating, on the whole, no original genius in the compiler.

It was above remarked that, when philosophy first made its way from Greece to Rome, the doctrines of the Stoical school were then chiefly prevalent in the republic. With a people who were only emerging from a simplicity or rather a severity of manners, it is not probable that the system of Epicurus would find a very favourable reception. As luxury, however, advanced, and corruption of manners began to undermine the strictness of the ancient morality, it also found its votaries. This change in the Roman manners it may not be uninteresting to consider somewhat minutely.

The picture of the Roman people during the five first centuries is so perfectly distinct, so widely different from what we find it in the latter ages of the republic, that we might at first be induced to think, that some very extraordinary causes must have co-operated to produce so total an alteration. Yet the transition was easy and natural,

and was, in the Roman people, the necessary and inevitable consequence of that rich and luxurious situation in which the virtuous and heroic temper of the earlier times had conduced to place the republic. A spirit of temperance, of frugality, and of industry, must be the characteristics of every infant colony. The poverty of the first Romans, the narrow territory to which they were limited, made it necessary for every citizen to labour for his subsistence. In the first ages, the patricians, when in the country, forgot all the distinctions of rank, and toiled daily in the fields like the lowest plebeian. Examples of this are familiar to every reader. Cincinnatus we have seen named dictator by the voice of his country, while at the plough. M. Curius, after expelling Pyrrhus from Italy, retired to the possession of a small farm, which he assiduously cultivated. The elder Cato was fond of this spot, and revered it on account of its former master. It was in emulation of the example of this ancient Roman that Cato betook himself to agriculture. Scipio Africanus also, after the conquest of Hannibal, and the reduction of Carthage, retired to his paternal fields, and with his own hand reared and grafted his fruit-trees. If such was the conduct and example of the highest magistrates and most eminent men in the state, what idea must we form of the manners and customs of the inferior ranks?

In times of peace and tranquillity, most of the citizens, employed at their small farms, visited the town only every ninth or market day. There they provided themselves with necessaries for the

week, and took their share in the public business of the commonwealth at the comitia. It was on these market-days that the tribunes harangued the people, and it was then that those men—employed for their daily occupation in labouring and husbandry—feeling their weight in the public deliberations, learned to know their own importance in the state, which was in no respect diminished by the necessary cares and duties to which, in those happy and primitive ages, custom had annexed respect and honour instead of meanness or reproach.

Thus simple were the occupations, and, of consequence, the manners of the ancient Romans. Employed either in their warlike expeditions, or, when at peace, in the frugal, laborious, and innocent avocations of a country life, it was to be expected, as a necessary result, that industry and a virtuous simplicity of manners should be the principal features in the character of a people so situated. “*Domi militiæque*,” says Sallust, “*boni mores colebantur—jūs bonumque apud eos non legibus magis quam naturā valebat: duabus artibus, audaciā in bello, ubi pax evenerat æquitate, seque rempublicam curabant.*” But this very discipline, and those manners which paved the way for the extension of the Roman arms, and for the conquest of the surrounding empires, became, of consequence, the remote cause of the corruption of the manners of the people in the later ages of the republic, and the introduction of that luxurious and effeminate spirit from which it is not difficult to deduce the ruin and downfall of the commonwealth. When, after the second Punic

war, they had pushed their conquests into Asia, and in the third Punic war accomplished the subversion of Carthage, and acquired the unlimited sovereignty of Greece, then it necessarily happened that, losing their ancient manners with their ancient poverty, possessed of wealth, and adopting with a willing servility the customs of the nations they subdued, the Romans became as vicious, as luxurious, and as effeminate as they had before been remarkable for their virtue, their industry, and their rigid simplicity of manners. They appeared now to be actuated by a new spirit, but chiefly by an affectation of taste in the fine arts, in which nature certainly had never qualified them to make any decided or eminent progress. The faculty to excel in these requires not only a predisposition of nature, an inherent acuteness of perception of what is beautiful, but also an intimate acquaintance with the objects of taste, and a long habit of exercising the judgment exclusively upon them. Of this natural predisposition to the fine arts the Romans never evinced any traces. On the contrary, even in the periods of their greatest refinement, we hear not of the excellence of a single painter, sculptor, or architect; nor did they indeed possess, until their conquest of Greece, any acquaintance with those exalted specimens of art upon which a corrected and chastened taste could alone have been formed. At that period, indeed, an immense field was at once opened to their view. The masterpieces of art poured in upon them; but these they did not possess the talents to appreciate. The extravagances of glare and show were more suited to their

judgment, and possessed more attractive beauties to their unpractised eyes; and it is natural, therefore, to conclude that the Roman luxury, so far as the fine arts were concerned, could only manifest itself in an awkward, heavy, and tasteless magnificence.

In order to give some idea of the manners of the Romans after they had undergone this remarkable change, or rather towards the end of the commonwealth, at a time when the extravagance of general luxury was felt throughout the whole body politic, and to point out also some customs which were peculiarly characteristic of this people, it may not be improper shortly to describe the manner in which the day was spent at Rome, as well by the lower as by the higher and more idle classes of the citizens. Extraordinary as it may appear to us, it is certain that the Romans were, for nearly five centuries, utterly ignorant of the division of the day by hours, and knew no other distinction but that of morning, mid-day, and evening. The laws of the Twelve Tables divided the day into two portions only, *ortus et occasus*, nor was it until a considerable time after that they added a third division, *meridies*. We are informed by Pliny the Naturalist, that till the 477th year of Rome, when Papirius Cursor caused the first sun-dial to be put up on the wall of the temple of Quirinus, they had never used any method of measuring time; that Valerius Messala brought another from Catania, in Sicily, and that these two, although very inaccurate in dividing time, continued to be the only regulators of the day at Rome for nearly a cen-

tury, till Scipio Nasica introduced the water-clock, which showed the hours both of the day and night.

The first, second, and third hours were differently employed at Rome by the different ranks of the people; and even by these differently according to their separate inclinations. It was the custom with many to begin the day by visiting the temples, where, according as their ideas of devotion were more or less strict, they either sacrificed, or paid their adoration by simply kissing their hand, or prostrating themselves before their own particular deity. Those who were more rigorously devout made their conscientious circuit to most of the temples in the city, a business which must necessarily have occupied many hours; but the great bulk of the citizens, attached to temporal concerns, and intent on more substantial duties, employed the morning very differently. The *Patroni* were attended by all their *Clientes*. The great had their levees, at which either their inferiors who wished to recommend themselves to their protection, or even their equals who courted their favour and friendship, crowded in the morning to pay their compliments. Pompey did not think it beneath him to appear at the levee of Cicero. The custom was to wait in the vestibule or ante-chamber, till the great man made his appearance; to pay him some compliment, couched either in wishes for his health or panegyric on his talents, or congratulation on any promotion which might have occurred, and afterwards to accompany him—either walking in his train, or attending by the side of his litter—to the senate-house,



or to the forum, and thence to reconduct him home.

The lower ranks and the more servile and parasitical courtiers, who had many such visits to pay, must have necessarily begun very early in the morning. Juvenal humorously describes them as setting out by star-light, and does not even give them time to tie their garters.

These visits Pliny calls *ante-lucana officia*. They were sometimes so troublesome to the great man to whom they were paid, that it was not unusual for him to go out by a back door, and so give his visitors the slip. Horace, in his fifth epistle, playfully advises his friend Torquatus to escape the importunities of his clients by this sinister expedient:—

“ rebus omissis,

Atria servantem postico falle clientem.”

This liberty, however, we may rest assured, was not very often taken; for if, as we have above seen, the expedients of those ancient courtiers, who in these remote times solicited the patronage of the great in Rome, were in few respects different from that watchful and attentive assiduity which still distinguishes the same classes amongst ourselves, we may rely also that the great in Rome were no less ambitious of receiving these marks of distinction, than the powerful in this country. Popularity was there, indeed, always the first object of ambition; and when the great man made the tour of his circle at the levee, he was not, we may be assured, the least complaisant of his company. And, indeed, in the latter

ages of the republic it was not enough for the great to show their affability by an empty salute or a simple squeeze of the hand; the courtiers were then accustomed to expect more substantial marks of their favour, and thought themselves ill used if they were not regaled with a breakfast of the most delicate viands, or repaid for their attendance by a present or a piece of money.

From the levee they next proceeded to the tribunal or to the forum—some, as concerned there either in the private or public business, others for amusement to hear what was going on. There the time was spent till noon, which among the Romans was the hour of dinner, chiefly a very light repast, and of which it was not customary to invite any guests to partake. After dinner the youth repaired to the Campus Martius, and spent the hours till sunset in a variety of sports and athletic exercises. The elder class retired for an hour to repose, and then passed the afternoon in their porticoes or galleries, which, in the house of every man of rank, formed a conspicuous part of the building. Many of these were open to the air, supported on pillars of stone or marble, under which they enjoyed the exercise of walking, and sometimes of being carried in their litters. Other galleries were sheltered from the air, and lighted by windows of a transparent talc or lapis specularis, which supplied the place of glass.\* These covered galleries were ornamented in the richest manner, and with the most expensive decorations—gilded roofs, paintings on the walls, and statues

\* “*Hibernis objecta notis specularia, puros  
Admittunt soles, et sine facie diem.*”—MARTIAL.

in the niches; and adjoining to them were their libraries, which in the latter days of the republic became an article of great expense, and on the furnishing of which the higher classes used particularly to pique themselves. The sumptuous Lucullus exceeded all his cotemporaries in this, as indeed in every other species of luxury. His library was more extensive than that of any other private citizen, and the use he made of it more noble. His porticoes, the halls where his books were arranged, and his gardens with which they communicated, were all open to the public. Strangers were more particularly welcomed, and his house, Plutarch informs us, became the asylum and the prytaneum of all the Greeks at Rome. In these galleries the master of the house amused himself in the evening, in conversations with his guests, or in sports with his friends. There likewise the poets came to recite their works, although this practice was probably confined to the most ostentatious, or the most needy, who in this way attempted to recommend themselves to a patron. "Non recito cuiquam," says Horace, "nisi amicis, idque coactus."

The houses of private citizens, and even of those of the higher classes, were of a very moderate size during the times of the republic. The Romans appear to have lived much in the open air, as a great part of their buildings consisted of vestibules and porticoes. The houses were detached from each other, and usually of one floor. The different apartments had each a single door, entering from the gallery or portico. These apartments, except the *triclinium* or hall, where they sat

at meals, were generally small, and lighted only by one square window near the ceilings. The furniture of the house and its decorations were simple, the walls ornamented with fresco painting in a light and cheerful style. The larger houses had each a garden behind for the cultivation of vegetables, and a few trees to yield a refreshing shade in summer.

This luxury of walking and amusing themselves under cover was not long confined to the rich and the powerful. These, to increase their popularity, built porticoes for the use of the public, and contended with each other in bestowing on them the most expensive adornments. In these porticoes all classes were to be found amusing themselves. Indeed idleness and luxury, towards the end of the republic, characterized equally the richer and the poorer citizens. They had approached that period so necessarily incident to every wealthy and overgrown state, when industry becomes a reproach, and amusement forms the engrossing object of life.

The passion for public games and magnificent spectacles constituted, at this period, a very striking feature in the Roman character. The shows of the amphitheatre rose naturally out of that taste for martial exercises, which we find in the first ages of every warlike people. About the 490th year of Rome, Marcus and Decimus Brutus presented a combat of gladiators for the first time at Rome. About a century after that period the athletæ were introduced for a public show; and there were combats of slaves with bears and lions. Sylla, during his prætorship, exhibited a combat where a

hundred men fought with a hundred lions; and Julius Cæsar, during his ædileship, presented a show where there fought three hundred couples of gladiators.\* It is astonishing to what a height the passion for these bloody entertainments was carried; and what is very remarkable was, that the spirit of luxury, which is in general found rather favourable to humanity, or at the least productive of a refinement of manners, amongst the Roman people, on the contrary, was marked by an increasing and unnatural ferocity in the public amusements—a circumstance not unworthy of attention from those who, in the present day, are advocates for those public fighting-matches which, in point of brutality, are, perhaps, little inferior to the more mortal combats at Rome.

The Lanistæ, whose business it was to instruct these gladiators in their profession, taught them not only the use of their arms, but likewise the most graceful postures of falling when they were wounded, and the finest attitudes of dying in. The food of these unfortunate victims was likewise prescribed to them, and was of such a nature as to enrich and thicken the blood, so that it might flow more leisurely through their wounds, and thus the spectators might be the longer gratified with the sight of their agonies. These miserable beings

\* Dion Cassius, in speaking of Pompey's shows, in which above five hundred lions were killed, besides elephants and other wild beasts, tells us it was a miserable spectacle, even to the populace, who were affected by the mournful cries of these poor animals (Dion, b. xxxix.); and Cicero broadly condemns those inhuman spectacles, as in his time affording no delight to the mob who gazed upon them.—CICERO, *Epist. ad Familiares*, b. vii. Epist. 1.

were also accustomed, on entering their profession, to take an oath, of which the form has been preserved to us in a fragment of Petronius. "In verba Eumolpi juravimus, uri, vinciri, verberari, ferroque necari, et quicquid aliud Eumolpus jussisset tanquam legitimi gladiatores domino, corpora animosque religiosissime addicimus"—*i. e.* "We swear that we will suffer ourselves to be bound, scourged, burned, or killed by the sword, or whatever else Eumolpus ordains, and thus, like free-born gladiators, we religiously devote both soul and body to our master." Is it not dreadful that human nature should ever have been reduced to such a state of degrading and incomprehensible barbarity?

In a former chapter, on the progress of literature amongst the Romans, the entertainments of the theatre were discussed at some length, but amongst these entertainments none during the later periods of the commonwealth became so popular as the taste for pantomime. Schools were instituted where this art was publicly taught, and these, we read, were often more frequented by the younger patricians than the lectures of the orators. A decree of the senate was found necessary to prohibit its members from attending these indecent assemblies, and discharging all of the equestrian order from publicly courting and encouraging the performers of pantomime. We may conceive to what a pitch of degeneracy the public manners had arrived, when we read that the affairs of the state were interrupted, and the minds of its ministers embroiled by the contentions of the different parties who supported each their favourite actors; and

that, on this account, it was more than once found necessary to expel them from the city.

Following the Romans through the ordinary occupations of the day, it was customary for them to go from the porticoes or the theatre to take the bath. Water, which in the more frugal days of the republic, was used only for the necessary purposes of life, was not brought to Rome by aqueducts till the 441st year of the city. It was till that time drawn from the Tiber, or from wells in the town. But it soon became one of the chief articles of luxury, to supply as well the public as the private baths, and many aqueducts were accordingly built, and public reservoirs and fountains reared in every quarter of the city. This luxury increased to such a degree that, under Augustus, there were seven hundred basins, a hundred and five fountains, and a hundred and thirty public reservoirs, all adorned in the most sumptuous manner, with columns, statues, and basso-relieues. To superintend these became an office of considerable dignity and emolument, and under the emperors was filled mostly by men of the first rank.

The practice of taking the cold bath was in early use at Rome, where the heat of the climate and the fatigue attending the athletic exercises made it requisite alike for the purposes of cleanliness and comfort. It was not till pretty late in the republic that the hot baths began to be introduced; but at last it became customary for all to take the warm bath before sitting down to supper. The rich had their baths in their own houses, in which, as in every other thing, they vied with each other in expense and magnificence.

Seneca, when he speaks of this piece of luxury, tells us his countrymen disdained to set their feet on anything but precious stones; and Pliny wishes old *Fabricius* alive, to witness the degeneracy of his posterity, whose seats in their private baths were made of solid silver. Under the later emperors, indeed, this luxury appears to have been carried to an almost incredible excess. The public baths built by Augustus, by Dioclesian, and by Caracalla, were sumptuous beyond description. These were open to all the citizens, who, for a trifling gratuity, had slaves to attend on them, to assist them in undressing, and to rub their bodies with flesh-brushes. The baths of Dioclesian were so large that they could accommodate 3000 persons bathing at the same time. They were adorned with columns of the finest marble, and decorated with a profusion of statues and of paintings. They consisted of a variety of apartments, destined not only for the purposes of bathing, but for various amusements, and even for literary and philosophic exercises. There were public libraries adjoining to the baths, halls of resort for the studious or for the idle, who met to talk over the news of the day; and to these also the poets resorted, as we have observed they did to the porticoes, to recite their compositions.

In the houses of the great, the bath was used immediately before they went to supper; and they came from the bath to the table in a loose sort of robe called, from its use, *convivialis* or *triclinaria*. It was customary for them to sup between the ninth and tenth hours, which, when the sun rose at six, would correspond with our three or



four in the afternoon, and at a proportional distance from sunset, as the days were longer or shorter. They must, therefore, have always sat down to supper with daylight; and indeed Vitruvius directs the supper-room to be constructed in such a manner that it shall have its aspect to the setting sun: "*Hyberna triclinia recedentem solem spectare debent*," (lib. vi. c. 5;) but they often, however early their hour of commencement, prolonged the entertainment through most of the night.

It is singular that, as with us moderns, luxury has thrown the meals much later than they were in the more frugal days of our ancestors, the same cause was attended with very contrary effects at Rome. In the early ages of the commonwealth, when daylight was valuable for the purposes of labour and industry, the citizens did not sup till sunset, but in the more advanced periods of the Roman state, when the luxury of the table became one of the most serious concerns in life, it was found necessary to begin early, that time might not be found wanting for such important concerns. The custom of reclining on couches came not into use till the end of the sixth century, and, for some time after it was adopted by the men, the Roman ladies, from motives of decency, continued to sit upright at table; but these scruples were soon removed, and all promiscuously adopted the recumbent posture, except the youth who had not yet attained the age of putting on the manly robe. They sat in a respectful posture at the bottom of the couch.

These couches were ranged along three sides of a square table, which was then called *triclinium*, as

was likewise the chamber itself in which they supped. The fourth side of the table remained open for the servants to place and remove the dishes. Above was a large canopy of cloth suspended by the corners, to prevent the company being incommoded with dust. It was this custom that enables Horace to introduce a ludicrous accident, which he describes as occurring at a supper given by the niggardly, but ostentatious Nasidienus to Mecænas, and some other courtiers. Whilst the landlord is enlarging on the praises of a favourite dish, and discussing the merits of the component ingredients of the sauce, the canopy falls down and involves everything, host, guest, supper, and dishes, in a cloud of dust and darkness.

“ Interea suspensa graves aulæa ruinas  
In patinam fecere trahentia pulveris atri  
Quantum non Aquilo Campanis excitat agris.”\*

B. ii. Sat. 8.

Every feast was attended with a certain mixture of religious ceremony. It began and concluded with a libation to the gods. In barbarous nations we know there was ever a strong affinity between a repast and a sacrifice. The offerings to the gods consisted of what men esteemed always their choicest food, and the priests, as the ministers of the gods, ate the sacrifice. The practice of libation, also, was of the highest antiquity. It was universal both among the Greeks and Romans;

\* In the time of Seneca, their halls of banquet were constructed with moveable roofs adorned with paintings, so that the ceiling was made to change along with the different courses. “Versatilia cœnationum laquearia ita coaugmentat ut subinde alia facies atque alia succedat, et toties tecta quoties fercula mutantur.”—SENECA, *Epist.* 90.

and the idea of the meal being a religious ceremony, both with regard to the libations of wine, and the offerings of the meat to the priests, showed itself in several other particulars. It was esteemed a most solemn obligation, if a person, laying his hand upon the table, should pronounce an oath. The *triclinium* was looked upon as an altar. The salt was also held sacred, and it was regarded as an unfavourable omen should it be spilt or overturned. It was customary, also, to place upon the table small *images*, or *penates*—

*Genii mensæ præsides*, or *epitrapetii*, as they were called, to whose honour it was chiefly that the libation was performed. These religious notions had this good effect, that amidst all their intemperance the Romans accounted it a species of sacrilege to allow a quarrel or an animosity at table, and the height of impiety to commit any violence or outrage. But these religious ideas could be only felt by a moderate and a virtuous people. When luxury had once spread its contagion, as was too certainly the case before the end of the republic, a few traces may remain in customs and ceremonies, but these can only be considered as the shadows of ancient virtue, after the substance had long perished. Such was the case with regard to the ceremonies we have mentioned. They still continued in observance after luxury and debauchery had reached their utmost height; but all those ideas of religion which had been interwoven with them were gone for ever.

It would be a task at once disagreeable and unprofitable to describe minutely those excesses which are painted in the strongest and often the

most disgusting colours by the ancient writers, both satirists and historians, or to dwell on the intemperance of those degraded times when, as Livy tells us, "a cook, who by their frugal ancestors was looked upon as the vilest and meanest of slaves, was considered as an officer of high importance, and that trade dignified by the name of an art, which before was regarded as the most servile drudgery."

It was a general custom, in preparing for a luxurious meal, to take a vomit a short time before sitting down to table. This was not regarded as a mark either of gluttony or epicurism, but was held to be done in compliment to the entertainer, that his guests might be enabled to carry off a greater quantity of his good fare. When Julius Cæsar paid a visit of reconciliation to Cicero, by inviting himself to sup with him, he took care to let Cicero know that he had taken a vomit beforehand, and was resolved to make a most enormous meal—and Cicero tells us he kept his word, which, for his own part, he took very kindly, and as a mark of Cæsar's high politeness. (Cic. Epist. ad Attic. 13, 52.)

Compared with that of the Romans, the luxury of the moderns would scarcely deserve the name of intemperance. Before the principal meal was placed on the table, it was customary to present an *antecæni* or collation, which consisted of pickles and spices, to provoke and sharpen the appetite. The thirst excited by this prelude to more serious occupation was allayed by a mixture of wine and honey, which they termed *promulsio*, and the stomach being thus prepared,

the supper itself was presented, after a short interval. The expense ridiculously bestowed on these entertainments, and the labour employed in collecting the rarest and most costly articles of food, exceed all belief. In this, as indeed in every other species of luxury, there was the most capricious refinement of extravagance. Suetonius mentions a supper given to Vitellius by his brother, in which, among other articles, there were 2000 of the choicest fishes (*lectissimorum piscium*,) 7000 of the most delicate birds—one dish, from its size and capacity, was named the *ægis* or *shield of Minerva*. It was filled chiefly with the livers of *scari* (a delicate species of fish,) the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of parrots (imagined, probably, to be tender from their much chattering,) and the bellies of lampreys, brought from the most distant provinces. This may serve as some specimen of the luxury of the Roman suppers.

Their entertainments were accompanied with every thing fitted to flatter the senses and to gratify the appetite. Musicians, male and female dancers, players of farce and pantomine, jesters and buffoons, and even gladiators, exhibited whilst the guests sat at table. In order, if possible, to restrain such extreme luxury, a variety of sumptuary laws were promulgated from time to time, some of them limiting the number of dishes, others the number of guests, and others the expense to be bestowed on an entertainment, but all these attempts were completely unsuccessful. How, in effect, could it have been possible to bring back ancient simplicity, unless they could have also recalled

ancient poverty? When a state has once become generally opulent, the expenses of the rich must keep pace with their fortunes, otherwise the poor would want employment and subsistence. It is luxury that is silently levelling that inequality, or at least keeping fortunes in a constant fluctuation, giving vigour in this manner to all those various parts of the political machine, which would be otherwise apt to lose their strength and pliability for want of motion. We may wish that Rome had remained poor and virtuous, but being once great and opulent, it was to have required an impossibility that she should not have been luxurious.

## CHAPTER V.

## On the Art of War among the Romans.

WE have seen the Romans engaged for many ages in continual wars, first with the petty states of Italy, and afterwards with foreign nations. From the prodigious success which attended the arms of this remarkable people, and from the dominion which they accomplished, at length, over almost the whole of the known world, it is a necessary inference that they must have carried the knowledge of the military art to a higher degree of perfection than any other of the ancient nations: to whatever collateral or partial causes we may attribute the success of some of their warlike enterprises, the great and leading cause of those rapid and extensive conquests could have been nothing else than the excellence of their military discipline, compared to that of the peoples whom they subdued. "It was not," says Vegetius, "to the superiority of numbers, nor to superior courage in the field, that the Romans owed their victories; but it was by art and by discipline that they defeated those immense hosts of Gauls which poured down upon Italy; that they subdued the Spaniards, a hardier and more warlike race than themselves; the Africans, whose wealth furnished inexhaustible armies; and conquered even the Greeks, whose military abilities were for many ages superior to their own."

The nature of this military discipline, by which the Romans became masters of the world, is, therefore, an object extremely deserving of attention; and I shall endeavour here to give some idea of the state of the art of war, such as we find it to have been in the latter ages of the commonwealth, and in the first period of the history of the empire.

In a former chapter, in treating of the system of Roman education, we have taken notice of those exercises of the body to which all the youth of the republic were accustomed from their earliest infancy. By the constant practice of wrestling, boxing, launching the javelin, running, and swimming, they were inured from their cradle to that species of life which a soldier leads in the most active campaign in the field. They were accustomed to the military pace, that is, to walk twenty miles, and sometimes twenty-four, in *four* hours. During these marches they carried burdens of sixty pounds weight; and the weapons with which they were armed were double the weight of those which were used in the actual field of battle.\*

Every year after the election of the consuls, twenty-four military tribunes were chosen; fourteen from the order of the *equites*, and ten from the body of the citizens. The people were then assembled by an edict of the consuls, commanding all who had attained the age of seventeen to appear in the area before the Capitol on an appointed day. According to the number of legions

\* Vegetius de Re Militari, c. 2; and Josephus, De Bell. Judaico, has given some very curious details of the Roman discipline.



which were to be formed, they appointed to each legion a certain number of tribunes. The tribes were then called out and divided into their proper centuries, and each century presented, by rotation, as many soldiers as there were legions intended to be raised. If there were four legions, each century took its turn in presenting four soldiers; and of these four, the tribunes of the first legion had the first choice of a man, the second the next, and so on; then four more were drawn out, and the second legion had the first choice. In the next selection, the third legion chose first, and in the following the fourth. Thus there was the utmost equality in the distribution of the citizens in the several legions.

The number of soldiers in the legion was various at different periods. At earlier times it consisted of 3000, of 4000, of 5000, of 6000; but under the emperors it might amount to even 10,000 or 11,000 men.

Among the ancient nations there were in general but two different arrangements of the troops in order of battle. The one was, that of the *phalanx*, commonly used by the Greeks; the other was the disposition of the troops by *manipuli* or companies, arranged in the form of a *chequer* or *quincunx*, which, after the war with Pyrrhus, became the ordinary arrangement of the Roman army, and was probably then first tried as the most commodious disposition against the attack of the elephants. In the order of the *phalanx*, the heavy-armed infantry were all ranged upon one continued line, with no other intervals than

those which distinguished the great divisions. In the *quincunx* order, a number of small companies or platoons were ranged in three straight lines, one behind the other, with alternate spaces between them, equal to the front of each company.

In the first line were the *Hastati*, heavy-armed troops, who at first used long spears, but afterwards laid them aside for the *pilum*, or great javelin, and the sword and buckler. In the second line were the *Principes*, likewise armed with the pilum and sword and buckler; and in the third line were the *Triarii*, armed with the long spear, formerly used by the *hastati*, and chiefly intended to sustain the shock of the enemy's cavalry. On the flanks of the line of the *hastati* were placed the cavalry, likewise in detached *manipuli* or companies, armed only with a lance and javelin, pointed at the end, and a small buckler. Immediately before the *hastati*, and in the front of the line, were placed the *Velites*, or light-armed troops, who usually began the engagement, and, after maintaining a skirmishing fight for a while, drew off to the rear, and retired behind the *triarii*, leaving the main body to come into action. After the *velites* had withdrawn, the *hastati* usually began the attack, by throwing the pilum, or great javelin, which was a ponderous spear of seven feet in length, and of such thickness as barely to be grasped in the hand. It could not be used at a distance, from its immense weight; but within the space of twenty or thirty yards its effect was dreadful. After the discharge of the pila, the *hastati* rushed on with

the sword and buckler, which were now their only weapons. The Roman sword was about a foot and a half in length, two-edged, with a broad blade, tapering to a point, so as to serve both for cutting and thrusting.\* What is singular is, that it was made of brass, but of so hard a composition as to shiver like steel. The sword and buckler were common to all the ranks of the infantry.†

The advantage of the chequer or quincunx arrangement of the legion was, that the Roman army could *three* times form the line of battle with fresh troops. Supposing the *hastati* to be foiled in their first onset, and even put to flight, the enemy found a new line of battle presented by the *principes* who, using the same arms, first began with the terrible discharge of the pila, and then fought with the short sword. Meantime the *hastati* had time to rally, and to form a new line behind the *triarii*.

No form could be so admirably adapted as that of the quincunx for changing movements according to the disposition of the enemy's line. On advancing, for example, to meet such an army as

\* The kind and quality of weapons is of very great consequence in war. The Roman sword was a weapon of great power and efficacy. The Romans owned themselves inferior to the Cimbri in courage and martial heroism; and confessed that even their superior discipline could not have availed them against the prodigious impetuosity of the attacks of this people; but, on the other hand, the swords of the Cimbri were of bad temper compared to theirs. They often bent at the first stroke; and the soldier was obliged to straighten his sword with his foot before he could make a second stroke.

† For an account of the arms of the Roman legion, see Lipsius de Militia Romana, c. 3.

the Gauls, ranged in the order of the phalanx, nothing was easier than to form a great front like that of the enemy, without any intervals, by bringing up the *principes* to fill the spaces betwixt the companies of the *hastati*. When, again, they had to do with an enemy less active, but to whom they did not wish to give an opportunity of insinuating themselves between the *manipuli*, they filled up the intervals with the *velites*, and kept the *principes* in the second line with the *triarii*, as a *corps de reserve*. In those engagements where the enemy had in their front a train of elephants, upon the advance of those animals, nothing more was requisite than for the *principes* to march to a side, and form themselves in a line with the *hastati* and *triarii*; in other words, to form themselves into columns, with open spaces between each column. Thus the elephants, persecuted and driven on by the *velites*, found an entrance by these spaces between the columns, and passed through the legion without doing any mischief. This manœuvre was practised by Scipio at the battle of Zama, and by Regulus, in his engagement in Africa with Xantippus.

The *quincunx* disposition was for some ages the characteristic of the Roman legion, which scarcely used any other method of arrangement; but the Romans afterwards made many innovations upon the ancient tactic.\* From the time of Marius, the *quincunx* had gone into disuse, and Cæsar describes the legions in his wars as under

\* See a very good account of the state of the art military under the emperors, in Gibbon's History, vol. i. c. 1.

a quite different form. The three manipuli of hastati, principes, and triarii composed a *cohort*, and were ranged not by intervals, but in a line behind each other, or in columns;—the triarii, armed with the long spears, being usually placed in the front. It is not easy to see in what respects this disposition excelled the former. From this period the tactic of the Romans was perpetually changing, and, in the opinion of the ablest judges, growing worse from age to age.\*

At no time was the tactic of the Romans more excellent than during the Punic wars; and to that cause we may attribute their successes against an enemy so formidable as the Carthaginians, and commanded by such able generals. The chief talent of Hannibal lay in varying and adapting the arrangement of his army according

\* We may learn from Vegetius the constitution of the Roman legion under Trajan and Hadrian. The heavy-armed infantry was then divided into ten cohorts, of fifty-five companies, under a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which had the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, consisted of 1105 soldiers; the remaining nine consisted each of 555. The number of infantry in the whole legion was, therefore, 6100 men. Their offensive arms were, 1st, the pilum; 2nd, a light spear; 3rd, the sword. The legion was usually drawn up eight deep, with a distance of three feet both between the files and ranks. The cavalry of the legion was divided into ten squadrons; the first, in proportion to the first cohort, consisting of 132 men, the rest only of 66—in all 726 horse. The horses of the cavalry were bred chiefly in Spain and Cappadocia. The arms of the men consisted of a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, a coat of mail, a javelin, and a long broadsword. They borrowed afterwards from the barbarians the use of lances and iron maces.

to circumstances of local situation; and often striking out some new and unexpected disposition formed in the instant of action, which disconcerted all the uniform and regular plans of the Romans. Such was that most remarkable disposition of the Carthaginian army at the battle of Cannæ, which decided the fate of that important day, by the utter destruction of the Roman army. I shall endeavour to give an idea of this very curious disposition, of which Polybius has left a full account; and I select it for this reason, that it has been misunderstood and misrepresented by the chevalier Folard, a very able writer on the art military, but who, from his ignorance of the Greek language, was obliged to rely on the Latin translation of a monk who knew nothing of the art of war. The errors of Folard have been fully pointed out in the "*Mémoires Militaires*" of M. Guichard.

Hannibal, having passed the winter and spring in quarters, began the campaign by ravaging the whole country; and, finding his army in want of provisions, he marched towards Cannæ, situated in a mountainous part of Apulia; a village where the Romans had established their magazines, and where they had brought all the military stores and provisions they had carried from Canusium. Hannibal took Cannæ by surprise; which, depriving the Romans of their stores, disconcerted their whole plan of operations. They could no longer pretend to harass and weary out the Carthaginians, but were obliged to think of giving them battle. The senate in this emergency sent a powerful reinforcement to the army,

which now amounted to 80,000 men, under the command of the two consuls, Varro and Æmilius; the latter a general of great experience, but cool and deliberate; the former rash, impetuous, and extremely obstinate. Æmilius, sensible that the great superiority of Hannibal's army lay in his cavalry, wished to delay coming to an action till his situation should afford the best opportunity for the operations of infantry. Varro was for an immediate attack, and, it being his turn to command, a pretty smart engagement ensued, which terminated doubtfully, but rather to the advantage of the Romans. Encouraged by this first success, they brooked with great impatience the cautious delays of Æmilius, who was still averse to a general engagement. The day following, when it was again the turn of Varro to command in chief, he ordered the army to take the field early in the morning, and to pass the river Aufidus, which lay between them and the Carthaginians. They passed without opposition, as Hannibal chose to rest everything upon a very artful manœuvre, which he had planned, to be discovered only in the moment of engagement.

The usual disposition of the Carthaginians was that of the phalanx. Varro resolved to imitate this disposition, and to give his army a front similar to it. His ignorance of the art of war here led him into a great error. He neglected the advantages which the legion derived from the ordinary disposition of the quincunx, and endeavoured to give a solidity and depth to his line, equal to that of the Carthaginians, not attending to this circumstance, that the arms of the legion

were not suited to the close and compressed position, on which depended the strength of the phalanx; for the hastati and the principes could neither throw their pila with effect, nor manage their swords, for want of room: and the triarii, ranged immediately behind and close upon the manipuli of the hastati, could not, with their long spears, be of the smallest service. Such, however, was Varro's disposition: he brought up the principes to fill the spaces between the companies of the hastati, and advanced the triarii, so as to join their companies to those of the hastati. On the right and left wing were the Roman cavalry, greatly inferior, as we have already observed, to those of the Carthaginians; and the velites or light infantry were ranged as usual in the front of the line.

Hannibal, whose army amounted to 40,000 foot and 10,000 horse, arranged the main body of his infantry in the close order of the *phalanx*; placing the best of his African heavy-armed troops to the right and left of the line, and in the centre the Gauls and Spaniards, armed only with the sword and buckler. On the right and left wings of his phalanx he posted the cavalry, immediately opposite to those of the enemy; and in the front of his line were ranged the Carthaginian light troops, in the same manner as those of the Romans. Having thus formed the great line of the phalanx, Hannibal ordered the Gauls and Spaniards in the centre to extend themselves forward from the main body in a semicircular curve. This movement was concealed from the Romans by the line of the Carthaginian light troops, and was



not perceived till after the skirmishing of the velites, when these troops, as was usual, fell back behind the main body.

The action began by these light troops, and continued pretty long and obstinate, while in the meantime the Carthaginian cavalry attacked the Roman horse on both wings, and, being infinitely superior to them in number, broke, dispersed, and cut them all to pieces. The signal was now given for the velites on both sides to fall back, and the Romans then, for the first time, perceived the curve in the Carthaginian front, which, being far advanced, came in contact with, and was immediately attacked by, the centre of the Roman line. The Gauls and Spaniards who formed the curve, unable to sustain the impetuosity of this onset, gave way, as Hannibal had expected; while that part of the Roman line, impetuously pursuing its advantage, pushed forward in proportion as the enemy retreated, by which means the Roman line was bent in the middle into an angular form. This position was what Hannibal foresaw and wished for. The Gauls and Spaniards, supported behind by the velites, formed a sort of new concave curve; and the heavy-armed infantry, the strength of the Carthaginian army, who had hitherto remained inactive, were now marched up, so as to come in contact with the opposite part of the Roman line, which was hurrying on to pursue the advantage gained by the centre, but which, now that the Africans were advanced, found themselves enclosed like a wedge.

In the meantime the Carthaginian cavalry under

the command of Asdrubal having entirely cut to pieces the horse of the enemy, doubled the flanks of the Roman army, and poured down upon the rear. They were now enclosed and furiously attacked on every quarter. The contest was not of long duration. The Romans, pressed together, had no space to use their arms. It was, upon the part of the Carthaginians, an absolute massacre and butchery; 70,000 of the Romans were killed upon the spot, and 10,000 taken prisoners. Such was the celebrated battle of Cannæ, according to the idea given by M. Guichard, which is supported in every particular by the text of Polybius.

The disposition of the quincunx would in all probability have saved the Roman army, and disappointed the effect of Hannibal's artful manœuvre; which it is probable he had conceived only upon seeing the enemy in the order of the phalanx: for had the legions been formed in the order of the quincunx, only the first line of hastati could have given in to the snare which was laid for them, and the principes and triarii, entire and unbroken, must have been an overmatch for all that was opposed to them.

The quincunx, notwithstanding its great advantages, was, as I have already observed, disused in the times of the emperors, and consequently the arms of the soldiers must likewise have undergone considerable changes. In the time of Vegetius, that is to say, under Valentinian, and probably long before that period, the pilum, the most formidable of the Roman weapons, was entirely laid aside, and a variety of weapons

introduced, which are described by that author, but which were quite unknown during the perfection of the art of war among the Romans.

One most material part of the military science among the Romans was their art of intrenchment. It was to the perfection to which Cæsar carried this art, that he owed many of his greatest advantages in war. It seems to have been a maxim of his, that it was possible to make up for any inferiority in the number of his troops, by the additional strength of his intrenchments. Thus with 60,000 men he defended himself in his intrenchments before *Alexia*, while the lines of circumvallation were attacked by 240,000 Gauls, and the lines of countervallation by 80,000, without any effect.

These intrenchments were thrown up with amazing despatch. Every soldier upon his march carried along with him his palisade, which was a strong branch of a tree, having at one end three or four smaller branches sharpened to a point and hardened in the fire. When the square of the camp was traced out, each soldier, throwing aside his buckler, began to dig a ditch, ordinarily nine feet, but sometimes fourteen or fifteen feet in depth, and as much in width. The earth was thrown up upon the inside in the form of a rampart four or five feet in height, which was faced on the outside with those palisadoes or *stipites*, strongly fixed in the earth, and set so near each other that the branches, crossing obliquely, presented their points outwards, and thus formed a strong hedge of irregular points, which it was extremely difficult to pierce. On each side of the square of the

camp was a gate or issue, where a strong guard was always posted, which no soldier could pass without leave, under pain of death.

When a city was besieged, it was customary for the Romans to divide their forces into several camps, encircling the place, and joined to each other by strong lines of circumvallation and countervallation. As the science of the attack and defence of fortified towns was carried to a great degree of perfection, both by the Romans and the Greeks, I shall endeavour to give some idea of this branch of the military art among the ancients, concerning which several of the modern writers are very much at variance.

The chevalier Folard, in his Commentary on Polybius, makes the military art of the ancients by far too complicated, and much more so than a plain construction of the words of his author, or, indeed, of any other of the ancient writers, will warrant.

In his treatise on the attack and defence of fortified places, he endeavours to prove, that, excepting the use of gunpowder and artillery, every operation used by modern engineers was known and practised by the ancients; and that, in particular, the mode of approach by parallels and trenches was in continual use. Yet it is very certain, as M. Guichard has abundantly shown, that those authors who have written most minutely of the most important sieges, as Polybius, Cæsar, Arrian, and Josephus, and who express themselves in their details with very great perspicuity, give not the smallest countenance to such a notion.

The Romans observed two methods of proceed-

ing in their sieges; the one was by means of the *agger*, a sort of terrace or mound of earth, on which they advanced their machines; and the other was by bringing up their machines to the foot of the walls, without the help of such a terrace. The first was necessary only where the place was very strong, and the walls skilfully guarded and fortified. The method of proceeding against such fortified places was this:—The army, as I before observed, was divided into different quarters, separately intrenched around the city, which intrenchments communicated with each other by a line of countervallation drawn on the side next the town, and a line of circumvallation on the outside, to defend against attacks from the quarter of the country. Then the ground was chosen for the construction of the *agger*, or terrace, which was a lengthened mound of earth, beginning by a gentle slope, from one of the camps, and proceeding forward, gradually increasing in elevation as it approached the town. As this terrace was to be the stage from which all the engines of attack were to be played against the city, it was the object of the besieged to endeavour, by every possible means, to prevent the carrying on of this work. Stones, darts, and combustible matters were continually launched against the operators; and sometimes a mine was dug from the city, to pass under the front of the terrace, and scoop away its foundation.

The besiegers, on the other hand, guarded against these annoyances by protecting themselves, while at work, under covered sheds, termed *vineæ*, which were composed of hurdles,

or wicker-work, covered with hides, and supported on stakes, which they moved along as the work advanced. The front of the terrace, where the workmen were chiefly employed, was protected either by a *testudo*, or covered pent-house, or simply by a curtain of skins, supported upon a large tree, laid transversely upon two others.

When the besiegers, under these covers, had brought the agger, or terrace, sufficiently near to the wall, they then advanced the engines of attack. The *catapultæ* and *balistæ* were ranged upon the terrace, at distances proportioned to their several projectile powers, and advanced or drawn back till they were made to bear upon the very spot which the besiegers intended to assail. The powers of these engines of attack almost exceed credibility. The *catapulta centenaria*, which was the smallest size of these machines, threw a weight of 100 pounds to the distance of 500 paces. The largest *catapultæ* threw stones of 1200 pounds weight. The *balistæ* were constructed for throwing great and heavy darts. As to the particular construction of these machines we can only form conjectures. The commentators on Vegetius have given several different forms of *catapultæ* and *balistæ*, but they are by far too complicated, and have a great deal of needless machinery of wheels, pulleys, axles, and levers. Much simpler contrivances might answer the same end, and be more easily managed. The form of the *catapulta*, given by M. Folard, is sufficiently simple, and corresponds well enough with the description in Vegetius.

A large lever is fixed at the lower end between two cables, very strongly twisted; the lever has, at the upper end, a hollow in the form of a dish, for receiving the stone or ball which is to be thrown. It is brought down to a horizontal position by means of this rope and hand-lever, which straightens the cable spring; and, when let off by means of a catch, it returns to its position with prodigious force, and, striking against the cross-bar at the top, the stone or ball is projected to a very great distance.

The balista, for throwing arrows, was, according to the idea of M. Folard, of a construction considerably different, though depending on the same mechanical principles with the catapulta; yet, from the promiscuous use of the two terms, which we often find made by the ancient authors, I think it is not at all improbable that the same machine might have been so contrived as to serve both for stones and arrows: for instance, nothing more was necessary than to fix a sort of long trough or groove, horizontally projecting from the cross-beam at the top, in which the arrows should be placed, with their ends a little advanced beyond the line of the cross-beam. It is evident, that when the spring-lever struck against the beam, so as to throw out a stone from the dish, the arrows in the groove, receiving the whole force of the stroke, would be discharged with great violence at the same time.

But these engines, the catapultæ and balistæ, though most formidable in their effects, were incapable of making a breach in the walls of a strongly fortified city. The only engine capable

of producing this effect was the *battering ram*; and the whole contrivances of the *aggeres*, or terraces, towers, *testudines*, *vineæ*, or covered galleries, had no other object than to facilitate the approach of the ram, which, if it was once effected, and the engine had free space to play, all ancient authors are agreed, that it was decisive of the fate of the town. No wall, however strong, was capable of resisting its force. The object, therefore, of the besiegers was, by means of the catapultæ and balistæ, and by the command which the elevation of the terrace gave them, to clear the walls of their defenders, and to obstruct the play of those engines which the besieged were continually working to prevent the approach of the ram, or to weaken its force; so that, as soon as the besiegers from the terrace were able to silence the batteries from the walls, the ram, coming up in security under the cover of a *testudo*, began to play, without intermission, till the breach was effected. It consisted of an enormous beam of wood, armed at the one end with a head of iron, and suspended so as to hang in *equilibrio*, from a cross-beam of the *testudo*, or pent-house.

The besiegers, besides employing the contrivances of the *aggeres*, *testudines*, *vineæ*, and *battering ram*, constructed frequently moveable towers of such a height as to overtop the walls of the city; and these towers answered a variety of purposes. The under part of the tower served for a *testudo* to a *battering ram*, which played under its cover, while on the top were planted archers and slingers, to clear the ramparts of those who endeavoured to counteract the operation of the



ram by letting down great beams, chains, and hoops to destroy its equilibrium, and impede its motion. These moveable towers were frequently so constructed as to let down from the side next to the city, a platform to serve as a bridge from the tower to the top of the walls, by means of which an access was gained for the besiegers into the city.

For the defence of the city, the besieged employed the same engines used by the besiegers for the discharge of stones and darts, the catapultæ and balistæ. The walls were carefully manned on every quarter where an attack was meditated, and every device employed for annoying the besiegers, retarding their operations, and preventing the approach of the ram to the walls. The gates, which the besiegers generally attempted to burn down, were defended from fire by covering them with iron plates or with raw skins. The wall above the gates was likewise bored with perpendicular openings, through which the besieged could pour water to extinguish them if set on fire. In the inside was a portcullis, suspended by iron chains, which, when a small body of the enemy had forced their way through the gates, the besieged could suddenly let down, and thus despatch them when they were separated from the rest of the assailants.

Such were the most ordinary methods employed by the ancients in the attack and defence of fortified towns. I speak not of the Romans alone; for they borrowed the greater part of their knowledge, in this branch of the military art, from the Greeks, among whom it was early reduced to a

system. If we compare the description which Josephus has given of the siege of Jotapat by the Romans in the reign of Vespasian, with the detail given us by Thucydides of the siege of Platea, which happened about 600 years before that period, we shall find the same method both of attack and defence. They continued to be in general use down to modern times; till the invention of gunpowder made a great change in almost every part of the art military.

It was not till the latter ages of the commonwealth, that naval warfare was at all practised by the Romans. Till the first Punic war, the Romans never had any equipment of ships for the purposes of war. A Carthaginian galley, which was stranded on the coast of Italy, served them, as formerly observed, for a model; and it is said, with a very moderate regard to probability, that, in the space of two months, this resolute and active people equipped a fleet of one hundred galleys of five banks of oars, and twenty of three banks. The construction of these vessels, and particularly the disposition of the different ranges, or banks of oars, has given occasion to much speculation among the moderns. The difficulty of supposing five different lines or orders of rowers disposed one above another, has occasioned the conjectures of some authors, that the expression of *triremes* and *quinqueremes* meant no more than that there were in some galleys three men to an oar, and in others five. But the expressions of the ancient writers clearly show that there were different ranks which sat above each other. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the importance which

men of learning assume to themselves from that parade of erudition which they sometimes choose to display on the most insignificant topics. Meibomius has written a treatise upon the structure of the ancient *triremis*, in which, from a variety of quotations from ancient authors, and critical disquisitions upon the meaning of some of their technical phrases, he shows that Scaliger, Salmasius, and the ablest of the modern critics, were totally in the dark as to the true sense of those authors; and so highly does he value himself upon his discoveries, that he dedicates his book, *Regibus, Principibus, Rebus-publicisque Maris Interni accolis*, "To all the kings, princes, and states, whose territories lie upon the Mediterranean." His treatise, again, has been answered by Opelius; and thus the dispute goes on to the length of folio volumes to settle this important point, whether the *thranites*, one order of rowers, sat uppermost, and the *thalamites* undermost, or whether these last were above, and the former below.\*

\* The late Lieutenant-General Melville, who united a taste for antiquities to great professional knowledge, has some curious ideas upon this subject of the structure of the ancient galleys. He conjectures that the waist part of the vessels rose obliquely above the water's edge, with an angle of forty-five degrees or near it; that upon the inner sides of this waist part, the seats of the rowers, each about two feet in length, were fixed horizontally in rows, with no more space between each seat and those on all sides of it, than should be found necessary for the free movements of men when rowing together. The *quincunx* or chequer order would afford this advantage in the highest degree possible; and in consequence of the combination of two obliquities, those inconveniences, which, according to the common idea

Besides the *longæ naves*, or ships of war, such as those we have mentioned, the Romans made use of small vessels called *liburnicæ*, which were serviceable during a naval engagement in carrying the general's or admiral's orders from one part of the squadron to the other. They were so called from the Liburni, a people of Illyria, who followed a piratical way of life, and used small quick-sailing vessels. In a naval engagement the general himself, in one of these *liburnicæ*, was wont to sail through the fleet, and give his orders for the dispositions and motions of the squadron.

In their naval engagements the ancients had no means of assailing each other at a distance but with the javelin; nor had they any contrivance for disabling the vessels of the enemy, unless in some of their largest ships, which were constructed

of the regulation of such galleys, must have attended the disposition of so great a number of rowers, are entirely removed. In 1773, the General caused the fifth part of the waist of a *quinqueremis* to be erected in the back yard of his house, in Great Pulteney Street. This model contained with sufficient ease, in a very small place, thirty rowers in five tiers of six men in each lengthwise, making one-fifth part of the rowers on each side of a *quinqueremis*, according to Polybius, who assigns three hundred for the whole complement, besides one hundred and twenty fighting men. This construction, the advantages of which appeared evident to those who examined it, serves to explain many difficult passages of the Greek and Roman writers concerning naval matters. The General's discovery is confirmed by ancient monuments. The collection at Portici contains ancient paintings of several galleys, one or two of which, by representing the stern part, show both the obliquity of the sides, and the rows of oars reaching to the water; and many ancient basso relievos show the oars issuing chequer-wise from the sides.—See Gillies' "History of Greece," cap. 5.

with towers on their stern, from which they could use the balista or catapulta. The *corvus*, or grappling machine, used by the Romans, served to fasten the ships to each other during action, while the men were engaged with the sword and buckler, or with spears. Under the emperors, the Romans maintained their distant conquests not only by their arms but by their fleets, which were disposed in all the quarters of the empire, and preserved a fixed station, as did the legions.\*

\* Augustus stationed two permanent fleets at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, and at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples, to command the two seas, each squadron containing several thousand marines. They consisted chiefly of the lighter vessels called *Liburnicae*. A very considerable armament was likewise stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and another was appointed to guard the Euxine. To these may be added the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube.

## CHAPTER VI.

Reflections arising from a View of the Roman History during the Commonwealth.

IN the view which I have endeavoured to give of the rise and the progress of the Roman republic, and of the states of Greece previously, I have been less attentive through the whole to a minute and scrupulous detail of events, than studious to mark those circumstances which show the spirit and genius of those remarkable nations, and illustrate those great moral and political truths which it is the most valuable province of history to point out and inculcate.

To consider history only as a magazine of facts, arranged in the order of their dates, is nothing more than the indulgence of a vain and childish curiosity; a study which tends to no valuable or useful purpose. The object of the study of history is one of the noblest of the pursuits of man. It is to furnish the mind with the knowledge of that great art on which depends the existence, the preservation, the happiness and prosperity of states and empires.

That the connexion of politics with morality is inseparable, the smallest acquaintance with history is sufficient to show.

No nation has afforded a more striking example than the Romans have done, of the necessity of

*good morals to the preservation of political liberty and the happiness of the people.* This is a doctrine of so much importance, that it cannot be too seriously considered nor attended to. Unlike, in this respect, to many other political truths which are interesting only to statesmen, and those who conduct the machine of government, this truth is of importance to be known and considered by every single individual of the community; because the error or fault is in the *conduct of individuals*, and can only be amended by a conviction brought home to the mind of every private man, that the reformation must be begun by his own virtuous and patriotic endeavours.

It will, therefore, be no unprofitable task if I shall endeavour, from the history of the Roman republic, and likewise from that of the states of Greece, which were before under our consideration, to throw together in one view such striking facts, as tend to exemplify and illustrate this great and useful lesson, of which the application is not confined to any age or country, but is equally suited to the subject of a *monarchy* and of a *republic*—equally important to the modern Briton, as it was to the ancient Greek or Roman. For in truth no principle is more false or more pernicious than that assumed by some political writers, that virtue is *essentially necessary to a republic alone*. Virtue is necessary, and indispensably necessary, to the existence of every government, whatever be its form; and no human institution where men are assembled together to act in concert, however limited be their numbers, or however ex-

tensive, however wise may be their governors, however excellent their laws, can possess any measure of duration without that powerful cement, virtue in the principles and morals of the people. *Quid leges sine moribus vanæ proficiunt*, is a sentiment equally applicable to all governments whatever.

The love of liberty, or the passion for national freedom, is a noble, a disinterested, and a virtuous feeling. Where this feeling is found to prevail in any great degree, it is a proof that the manners of that community are yet pure and unadulterated; for corruption of manners infallibly extinguishes the patriotic spirit. In a nation confessedly corrupted, there is often found a prevailing cry for liberty, which is heard the loudest among the most profligate of the community; but let us carefully distinguish *that* spirit from *virtuous patriotism*. Let us examine the morals, the private manners of the demagogue who preaches forth the love of liberty; remark the character and examine the lives of those who listen with the greatest avidity to his harangues, and re-echo his vociferations—and let this be our criterion to judge of the principle which actuates them.\* The aversion to restraint assumes the same external appearance with the love of liberty; but this criterion will enable us to distinguish the reality

\* "That man," says Æschines, "who is an unnatural father, and a hater of his own blood, can never be a worthy leader of the people; the soul that is insensible to the tenderest domestic relations can never feel the more general bond of patriotic affection: he who in private life is vicious, can never be virtuous in the concerns of the public."



from the counterfeit. In fact, the spirit of liberty and a general corruption of manners are so totally adverse and repugnant to each other, that it is utterly impossible they should have even the most transitory existence in the same age and nation. When Thrasybulus delivered Athens from the thirty tyrants, liberty came too late; the manners of the Athenians were irretrievably corrupted; licentiousness, avarice, and debauchery had induced a mortal disease. When Antigonus and the Achæan states restored liberty to the Spartans, they could not enjoy or preserve it; the spirit of liberty was utterly extinct, for they were a corrupted people. The liberty of Rome could not be recovered by the death of Cæsar; it had gone for ever with her virtuous manners.

On the other hand, while virtue remains in the manners of the people, no national misfortune is irretrievable, nor any political situation so desperate, that hope may not remain for a favourable change. If the morals of the people be entire, the spirit of patriotism pervading the ranks of the state will excite to such exertions as may soon recover the national honour. Of this truth the Roman state afforded at one time a most striking example. When Hannibal was carrying every thing before him in Italy, when the Roman name was sunk so low that the allies of the republic were daily dropping off, and the Italian states seemed to stand aloof, and leave her to her fate, there was in the manners of the people, and in that patriotic ardour which can only exist in an uncorrupted age, a spirit of reconvalence which speedily operated a most wonderful change

of fortune. Of all the allied states, Hiero, king of Syracuse, manifested the greatest political foresight. When solicited to forsake the Romans in this hour of their adversity, he stood firm to his alliance. He saw, that, although sunk under the pressure of temporary misfortune, patriotism was still alive and the constitution of the republic was still sound; and he rightly concluded that she would recover her strength and splendour. So likewise at Carthage, when the intelligence arrived of the great victory gained over the Romans at Cannæ;—the most sanguine and short-sighted manifested the highest exultation, and concluded that Rome for certain was in the possession of Hannibal, *et quod actum erat de republicâ Romanâ*: but the wiser sort judged far otherwise; and, hearing of those intrepid resolutions of the senate upon that great calamity, sagaciously foresaw that this misfortune would but rouse to a more desperate resistance, and accumulate the whole strength of the Romans, of which hitherto there had been only partial exertions. The lapse of a hundred and forty years, however, made a prodigious change in the Roman character. In the time of Marius and Sylla, a defeat like Cannæ would have been decisive of the fate of Rome. Had Hiero lived in the time of the second triumvirate, he would have abandoned the republic to her fate, which he must have seen to be inevitable.

The force of the torrent of corruption in the degeneracy of a nation is never so sensibly perceived, so strongly felt, as when one man of uncommon virtue makes a signal endeavour to oppose it. If his example, though ineffectual to excite a general

imitation, is yet strong enough to attract applause, there is still some faint hope that *that* nation or people is not beyond the possibility of recovery. Thus, when, after the defeat of Antiochus, and the plunder of his kingdom, the virtuous Scipio withstood every temptation to accumulate wealth—temptations judged so powerful, that it was thought impossible he should have resisted them, and he underwent on that ground a calumnious prosecution—the conduct of that great man on this occasion excited universal admiration; a proof that, amidst great corruption, public virtue was not yet *extinct*. In that age, a few such men as Scipio might have postponed the approaching ruin of their country. But when things have once proceeded to that depth of degeneracy, that the example of one virtuous man strenuously resisting the torrent cannot command even a sterile applause, but is received with scorn and contempt, then is that nation gone beyond all hopes, and no human power can prevent its hastening to ruin. A very few years from the time of the last-mentioned example had produced this fatal difference in the manners of the Romans. When the first triumvirate, Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, had gone such lengths towards the destruction of the Roman liberty, and had so debauched the manners of the people, that candidates for offices, instead of depending on their merits or services, openly bought the suffrages of the people, and, improving in corruption, instead of purchasing single votes, went directly to the triumviri and paid down the ready money; when all was going headlong to perdition, the younger Cato attempted

to impose some check upon this torrent of wickedness. What was the consequence? He only procured to himself the contempt and hatred of both rich and poor, the former detesting the man who forbade them to buy the liberty of their country, and the latter execrating him who would have prevented them from making money by the sale of it.

Whether it was the intercourse with the Carthaginians, whose want of probity and of national faith had passed into a proverb; or whether it was the internal corruption of the manners of the Romans themselves, a people now flushed with the arrogance that attends repeated conquests—it is not easy to determine; but it is certain that the national character of the Romans seems to have undergone its most remarkable change for the worse, from the time of the destruction of their rival, Carthage. The last Punic war itself was prompted, as we have seen, by a most mean, ungenerous, and dastardly spirit in the Romans. But after the fall of Carthage, some of the public measures became stained with the most horrible perfidy. Their conduct to Viriathus, a Spanish chief, of whom they first purchased an ignominious peace, and afterwards broke it by hiring assassins to murder him; and their shameful treachery and cruelty to the people of Numantia, whom they basely attacked, murdered, and exterminated, while they thought themselves safe under the sanction of a most solemn treaty—these are instances marking so total a depravation of national character, as could be followed by nothing else but the ruin of the state that could furnish them. Accord-

ingly, we find similar instances following each other in the quickest succession, from this time down to the entire subversion of the commonwealth.

When the passion of avarice had, as at this time, pervaded all the ranks of the state, it is not to be wondered that the public measures should be, in the greatest degree, mean and disgraceful. The ambition of conquest was now little else than the desire of rapine and plunder. If the allies of the state were opulent, the Romans considered their wealth as a sufficient reason for dissolving all treaties between them, and holding them as a lawful object of conquest. Thus the kingdoms of Numidia, of Pergamus, of Cappadocia, of Bithynia, separate sovereignties bound to the allegiance of the Romans by the most solemn treaties, were invaded as if they had been ancient and natural enemies, and reduced to the condition of conquered provinces. The senate made a kind of traffic of thrones and governments, selling them openly to the highest bidder.

It is curious, in this state of the Roman manners, to observe the pretences sometimes alleged for going to war, when any country offered a tempting object to their avidity and rapaciousness.

Manlius, the consul, undertook an expedition against the Gallo-Grecians or Galatians, a people of Asia Minor. It was alleged, that the war was unjust, for they had given the Romans no sort of provocation. But the general urged in excuse, that they were a wicked and profligate people, and

that some of their ancestors, a few centuries before, had plundered the temple of Delphi. The apology was admitted, and Manlius was decreed the honour of a triumph for having avenged this horrible sacrilege. Justin, the historian, informs us of a similiar instance. The Romans engaging along with the Acarnanians, against the people of Ætolia, had no other excuse to allege for their interference in this quarrel, than that the Acarnanians had performed a signal act of friendship to their ancestors about a thousand years before—which was, that they had not joined the other Grecian states *in sending troops to the siege of Troy.*

In the last ages of the commonwealth, the generals who commanded in those military expeditions, from a selfish and ambitious policy, studied to increase this prevailing depravity. They allowed their soldiers to plunder with impunity, and countenanced every species of dissoluteness of manners, in order to gain the affections of the troops. “Lucius Sylla,” says Sallust, “that he might gain the attachment of his army, entirely corrupted their ancient simplicity of manners.” It was under him, in his Asiatic expeditions, that the Roman soldiers first became addicted to debauchery and drinking. There also they learnt an affectation of taste for paintings and for statues; a taste which, in them, led to private theft, to public rapine, and even to sacrilege. The vanquished nations had nothing to expect from such conquerors, but to be stripped and plundered of all they possessed.

The shocking corruption of which Jugurtha made the experiment upon all the ranks of the state—the facility which he found in screening himself from the punishment of his atrocious crimes, first by bribing the Roman senate, and afterwards by corrupting the generals who were sent against him—are scarcely credible to those who have been accustomed to consider the Romans in the early times of the republic, as an heroic, a free, and a virtuous people. But the Romans were now weary of calm and rational happiness; their virtues were an incumbrance; and they saw no value in their liberty, but in so far as they could make money by the sale of it. Some few, who yet possessed a remnant of virtue, either from motives of personal safety, or perhaps ashamed to live in such society, voluntarily banished themselves from their country. The scenes that followed under Sylla, Cinna, and the two triumvirates, were the last struggles which terminated a violent and mortal disease.

That the extinction of the liberties of the Roman people, and the downfall of the commonwealth, were owing to the corruption of the Roman manners, there cannot be the smallest doubt; nor is it difficult to point out in a few words the causes of that corruption. The extent of the Roman dominions, towards the end of the republic, proved fatal to its virtues. While confined within the bounds of Italy, every Roman soldier, accustomed to a life of hardship, of frugality, and of industry, placed his chief happiness in contributing in war to the preservation of his country, and in peace to

the maintenance of his family by honest labour. A state of this kind, which knows no intervals of ease or of indolence, is a certain preservative of good morals, and a sure antidote against every species of corruption. But the conquest of Italy paved the way for the reduction of foreign nations; for an immense acquisition of territory—a flood of wealth—and an acquaintance with the manners, the luxuries, and the vices of the nations whom they subdued. The Roman generals, instead of returning as formerly, after a successful war, to the labours of the field, the occupations of industry, and a life of temperance and frugality, were now the governors of kingdoms and of provinces. In these they lived with the splendour of sovereign princes, and, returning, after the period of their command, to Rome, brought with them immense treasures, which they had accumulated by every species of rapine and oppression. Their importance at home was now signalized by a desire of obtaining dominion over their country similar to that which they had exercised in their province. Utterly impatient of the restraints of a subject, they could be satisfied with nothing less than sovereignty. The armies they had commanded abroad, debauched by the plunder of kingdoms, and attached by selfish interest to the men who had countenanced and indulged them in rapine, were completely disposed to support them in all their schemes of ambition. It was now only necessary to secure the favour of the people of Rome, which the increasing taste for luxury presented an easy method of obtaining. Games and shows were



exhibited at the most enormous expense, and festivals prepared for the populace, with every refinement of luxurious magnificence; and the Roman people, in the emphatic words of Juvenal,

———"duas tantum res anxius optat,  
Panem et Circenses,"

(that is, anxious only for food and games,) easily abandoned their liberty to the man who went the farthest in indulging them in their sensual gratifications. Rivals in the same path of ambition divided this worthless populace into parties. "The public assemblies," as M. Montesquieu has well remarked, "were now so many conspiracies against the state, and a tumultuous crowd of seditious wretches were dignified with the title of *comitia*. The authority of the people and their laws were, in these times of universal anarchy, no more than a chimera." With a people thus fated to destruction, in a government thus irretrievably destroyed by the decay of those springs which once supported it, it was a matter of very little consequence by the hands of what particular individuals it was finally extinguished. We have seen who were the active instruments in that dissolution, and the measures by which they accomplished it, and it is needless here to recapitulate them.

From a consideration of the rise and fall of the states of Greece and Rome, a political question has arisen, which in this place it is of some importance to examine, and which the preceding observations, I believe, may, in a great measure, assist us in solving.

There is no maxim more common among the political writers, nor any which is generally received.

with less hesitation, than this, that the constitution of every empire, like that of the human body, has necessarily its successive periods of growth, maturity, decline, and extinction. The fate of all the ancient nations whose annals are recorded in history has led to the adopting of this as an axiom, for which, independent of experience, it is not very easy to assign a reasonable foundation.

All conclusions from analogy should be cautiously weighed. The mind of man, pleasing itself with its own sagacity in discovering relations not obvious to a common observer, has a great propensity, in comparing facts, to reduce them to general laws, and, from the coincidence and even resemblance of a few striking particulars, is apt very hastily to conclude that a perfect analogy holds between them. This mode of reasoning is extremely fallacious, and is never more to be suspected than when an analogy is attempted to be drawn from physical truths to moral ones.

The human body, we know, contains within itself the principles of decay. It undergoes a perpetual change from time. The bodily organs, at first weak and imperfect, attain gradually to their perfect strength. At this period they cannot be arrested, but are subject to a decline equally perceptible with their progress to perfection. But this is not the case with the body politic. The springs of its life do not necessarily undergo a perpetual change from time; nor is it subject to the influence of any principle of corruption which may not be checked and even eradicated by wholesome laws. "If," says the eloquent Rousseau,

"Sparta and Rome have gone to destruction, what government or constitution can hope for perpetuity?" True, it may be answered, Sparta and Rome *have* gone to destruction; but was this the effect of a law of nature, or does it follow that since these two states, excellent indeed in many respects in their constitution, are now extinct, all others must exhibit a similar progress? From the history of ancient nations, it is not difficult for a reader of discernment to discover and point out the principle of corruption which has led to their dissolution; and a good politician can see what remedy could have been effectual to check or to eradicate the evil. Sparta enjoyed a longer period of prosperous duration than any other state of antiquity. As long as her original constitution remained inviolate, which was for the period of several centuries, the Lacedæmonians were a virtuous, a happy, and a respectable people. Frugality, we know, was the soul of Lycurgus's establishment. The luxurious disposition of a single citizen introduced the poison of corruption. Lysander, whose military talents raised his country to a superiority over all the Grecian states, sent home, after the conquest of Athens, the wealth of that luxurious republic to Lacedæmon. It was debated in the senate, whether it should be received: the best and wisest of that order considered it as a most dangerous breach of the institutions of their legislator; but others were dazzled with the lustre of that gold, with which they were, till now, unacquainted, and the influence of Lysander prevailed for its reception. It was decreed to receive the money for the use of

the state, while it was at the same time declared a capital crime for any of it to be found in the possession of a private citizen—a weak resolution, which, in effect, was consecrating, and making respectable in the eyes of the citizens, that very thing of which it was necessary to forbid them to aspire at the possession.

Thus did corruption begin its first attack upon the constitution of Lycurgus. But was this corruption a necessary or an unavoidable evil? was Sparta come to that period, when a Lysander *must* of necessity have arisen, whose disposition was adverse to the spirit of her constitution, and whose influence was sufficiently powerful to effect that breach of her fundamental laws? A single voice in the senate, perhaps, decided the fate of that illustrious commonwealth. Had there been one other virtuous man, whose negative would have caused the rejection of that pernicious measure, Sparta might have continued to exist for ages, frugal, warlike, virtuous, and uncorrupted. Or again, even supposing corruption once introduced, was it utterly impossible to find a remedy for the disease? Might not a second Lycurgus have arisen, who could check that evil in its infancy, against which the first was able so well to guard?

The beginning of the corruption of the Roman state, we have seen, may be dated from the time that the territory was extended beyond the bounds of Italy. The fatal effects of enlarging the empire were certainly not foreseen; or we must conclude, that the same parties, who were so jealous of the smallest attacks upon the liberty of the

people, would have been doubly anxious to have guarded against measures which led, though remotely, to the extinction of all liberty and the overthrow of the constitution; and, had the effect of these measures been foreseen, a few wise and virtuous politicians might have prevented this being adopted. This, at least, we may say, that if, by a fundamental law of the state, the Roman empire had been confined to Italy, and it had been a capital crime for any Roman citizen to have proposed to carry the arms of the republic beyond the limits of that country, the republic might have preserved its constitution inviolate for many ages beyond the period of its actual duration.

Several ingenious men have exercised their talents in framing the plan of such a political constitution as should best promote the happiness of the citizens, while it possessed the greatest possible stability. We lay out of the question such ideal governments as the Republic of Plato, the Utopia of More, and some modern theories no less chimerical, because they proceed upon the basis of amending the nature of man, and eradicating all his evil passions. The systems of Harrington, however, in his "Oceana," and of Mr. Hume, in his "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," have been considered as more worthy of the attention of mankind, as resting upon the basis of human nature, such as it is, and without assuming for their foundation any wonderful improvement either of the moral or intellectual nature of our species. Yet, in so far as either of these systems has been partially introduced into practice, we

have very little reason to subscribe to any eulogium upon their merits. Harrington, who wrote his "Oceana" during the period of the commonwealth of England, was so intoxicated with that newly-erected system of government, as agreeing in many respects with his own theory, that he boldly ventured to pronounce it impossible that monarchy should ever be re-established in England. Yet his book was scarcely published, when the nation, weary to death of an experiment which, under the mask of freedom, had loaded them with tenfold tyranny, unanimously recurred to their ancient monarchical constitution.

With respect to Mr. Hume's "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," it were, perhaps, not difficult to show that, instead of simplifying the machine of government, it renders it so complicated, that it would be impossible for it to proceed either with that regularity or despatch which is often most essential to the mass of public measures. If, for example, in Mr. Hume's senate of one hundred members, there should be only ten dissentient voices to the passing of a law, that law is to be sent back to be debated and canvassed by no less than 11,000 county representatives. In the same manner, if there should be but five of the one hundred senators who approve of a law, while ninety-five disapprove of it, those five have a right to summon the 11,000 county representatives, and take their sense of the matter. It surely requires little political judgment to pronounce that such a constitution is utterly unfit for the regulation of an extended or populous empire; yet Great Britain is the subject upon which he supposes in theory

that the experiment is to be tried. God forbid it ever should! Had this experiment been proposed in reality, Mr. Hume himself would have been the first man to have resisted it. His genuine sentiments of such experiments he has given in the words of sound sense and wisdom. "It is not with forms of government," says he, "as with other artificial contrivances, where an old engine may be rejected if we can discover another more accurate or commodious, or where trials may be safely made, even though the success be doubtful. An established government has an infinite advantage by that very circumstance of its being established; the bulk of mankind being governed by authority, not reason, and never attributing authority to any thing that has not the recommendation of antiquity. To tamper, therefore, in this affair," says he, "and to try experiments, merely upon the credit of supposed argument and philosophy, can never be the part of a wise magistrate, who will bear a *reverence* to what carries the marks of age: though he may attempt some improvements for the public good, yet will he adjust his innovations as much as possible to the ancient fabric, and preserve entire the chief pillars and supports of the constitution."

Time, which brings improvement to every science, has undoubtedly contributed much to the advancement of political knowledge. Among the chief advantages derived from the art of printing is that of fixing and perpetuating all human attainments in science, which, before that invention, either perished with their authors, or if preserved by writing, were sparingly communicated even in the

country which produced them, seldom reached beyond it, and were often in the course of a few generations irretrievably lost. By the art of printing, the opinions of some of the greatest of the ancient philosophers and politicians, and, what is much more valuable, the great outlines of the history of the most remarkable states of antiquity, their laws, their manners, and their customs, are now committed to perpetual records, open to all nations, and familiar to the knowledge of every individual who has enjoyed the most ordinary education.

It is from this knowledge of the accumulated experience of ages, that not only men, but nations, may derive the most important lessons. History will inform us, that some nations have enjoyed, during the course of many ages, an unvarying and uninterrupted prosperity; while others have been destined to a short, unfortunate, and despicable mediocrity. History will inform us, that the greatest empires which have hitherto existed on the earth, are now sunk into oblivion; that Persia, Egypt, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, have fallen themselves, like the petty states which they overwhelmed in their conquest. But while we contemplate their changes of fortune, their prosperity, their disgraces, their revolutions, and their final catastrophe, must these vicissitudes be considered only as the effect of a blind fatality? Can they furnish us with no other conclusion than that every human institution must yield to the hand of time, against which neither wisdom nor virtue can ultimately afford a defence? No, certainly: every nation of antiquity has met with that fate which



either its own political institutions, or the operation of foreign circumstances, must necessarily have induced. "Accustom your mind," said the excellent Phocion to Aristias, "to discern in the prosperity of nations that recompense which the Author of Nature has affixed to the practice of virtue; and in their adversity, the chastisement which he has thought proper to bestow on vice." No state ever ceased to be prosperous but in consequence of having departed from those institutions to which she owed her prosperity.

The ancient political writers, in speaking on the best form of a political establishment, held this as a great *desideratum*, that a government should possess within itself a power of periodical reformation; a capacity of reforming from time to time all abuses; of checking every overgrowth of power in any one branch of the body politic; and, at short intervals of time, winding up, as it were, the springs of the machine, and bringing the constitution back to its first principles. To the want of this power of periodical reformation in the ancient constitutions, which was ineffectually endeavoured to be supplied by such contrivances as the *ostracism* and *petalism*, we may in a great measure attribute their decline and extinction; for in these governments, when the balance was once destroyed by an increase of power in any one branch, the evil grew worse from day to day, and, at length, was utterly irremediable, unless by a revolution or entire change of the political system. Happily for us Britons, that which was a *desideratum* in the ancient governments is with us realized; that

power of reforming all abuses, and even of making alterations and amendments as time and circumstances require, which is perfectly agreeable to the spirit of our constitution, has given us an unspeakable advantage, both over all the states of antiquity, and over every other government among the moderns. But let us not abuse this advantage, or convert what is a wholesome remedy into a poison. There are seasons when political reforms are safe, expedient, and desirable; there are others when none but the most rash empiric would prescribe their application. If when the minds of a people are violently agitated by political enthusiasm, kindled by the example of other nations actually in a state of revolution—if while that class of the people who derive their subsistence from bodily labour and industry are artfully rendered discontented with their situation, inflamed by pictures of imaginary grievances, and stimulated by delusive representations of immunities to be acquired, and blessings to be obtained, by new political systems, in which they themselves are to be legislators and governors—if there should be a time when the common people are taught to believe that a subordination of ranks and conditions is contrary to the laws of God and nature, and that the inequality they perceive in the possessions of the rich and poor is a proof of the diseased state of the body politic—if such should be the delusions of the community, which the traitorous designs of others aim at rendering general; in such a crisis it cannot be the part of true patriotism to attempt the reform or amendment even of confessed imperfections. The

hazard of the experiment at such a time is apparent to all rational and reflecting men. It is *then* we feel it our *duty* to resist *all* attempts at innovation—to cherish with gratitude the blessings we enjoy, and quietly await a more favourable opportunity of gently and easily removing our small imperfections—trivial, indeed, when balanced against that high measure of political happiness of which the community at large are possessed.

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## BOOK THE FIFTH.

## CHAPTER I.

Fate of the Roman Republic decided by the Battle of Actium—Reign of Augustus—Birth of our Saviour  
 JESUS CHRIST—Tiberius—Crucifixion of our Saviour—  
 Caligula—Claudius—Nero—Galba—Otho—Vitellius—  
 Vespasian — Titus — Domitian — Nerva — Trajan—  
 Adrian.

THE battle of Actium decided, as we have above seen, the fate of the Roman republic; and Octavius, now hailed by the splendid title of Augustus, was master of the Roman empire. We have seen this singular person raise himself to the highest summit of power, without a tincture of those manly and heroic virtues which generally distinguish the authors of important revolutions. Those fortunate circumstances which concurred to promote his elevation—the adoption by Julius Cæsar, the weakness of Lepidus, the infatuation of Marc Antony, the treachery of Cleopatra, and perhaps, more than all, his own insinuating flattery and duplicity of conduct—were shortly hinted at as the great instruments in the good fortune of Augustus.

Possessing that sagacity which enabled him to discern distinctly what species of character would please the people, he had, in addition to this, all that versatility of genius which enabled him to

assume it; and so successfully did he follow out this idea, that to those unacquainted with the former conduct of the man, nothing was now discernible but the qualities which were indicative of goodness and virtue and munificence. The fate of Cæsar warned him of the insecurity of an usurped dominion; and we shall see him, whilst he studiously imitated the clemency of his great predecessor, affect a much greater degree of respect for the pretended rights of that degraded people whom he ruled at the same time with the most absolute authority. He had not yet returned from Egypt when, at Rome, they had already decreed him every honour both human and divine. The title of Imperator was conferred on him for life. His colleague Sextus Apuleius, along with the whole senate, took a solemn oath to obey the emperor's decrees; and it was determined that he should hold the consulate so long as he esteemed it necessary for the interests of the people. Such was the contemptible servility of all ranks of the state, that temples were erected to his honour, and public worship and sacrifice performed at the altars of the "divine Augustus." He, however, with becoming modesty, requested that these honours might be paid to him in the provinces alone, as *at Rome* he should never regard himself but as a private citizen invested with the superintendence of the rights and liberties of the republic. The state being now in profound peace, the temple of Janus, which had remained open since the beginning of the second Punic war—a period of 188 years—was shut; an event which occasioned the most universal joy. This single circumstance

contributed much to abolish the memory of all those cruelties, proscriptions, and complicated horrors, which had accompanied the triumvirate and the civil wars; and the "infatuated Romans now believed themselves a free people, since they had no longer to fight for their liberty."\*

It was the policy of Augustus to keep up this favourable delusion, by extraordinary marks of indulgence and munificence. He gratified the people by continually amusing them with their favourite games and spectacles; he affected an extreme regard for all the ancient popular customs; he pretended the utmost deference for the senate; he re-established the Comitia, which the internal commotions of the government had prevented from being regularly held; he flattered the people with the ancient right of electing their own magistrates; if *he* presented candidates, it was only to give a simple recommendation, under reservation that they should be judged worthy by the people; and the people on their part could not but regard, as the most certain symptom of desert, the recommendation of so gracious a prince. It was in this manner that Augustus, by the retention of all those empty but ancient appendages of liberty, concealed the form of that arbitrary monarchy which he determined to maintain; and that he thus, with the most hypocritical and specious generosity, contrived, with the machinery of freedom, to accomplish all the purposes of despotism.

After having established an appearance of order in the several departments of the state, Augustus,

\* Condillac.

to complete the farce, affected a wish to abdicate his authority, and return to the rank of a private citizen; but this was a piece of gross affectation. He consulted Mecænas, however, and Marcus Agrippa, whether he ought to follow his inclination. Mecænas, with the most honest, though certainly not the wisest policy, exhorted him to put his design in execution; but Agrippa, more of a courtier, and perhaps having more discernment into the real character of Augustus, or dreading the repetition of those cruel and turbulent scenes which had preceded his exaltation, assured him that the public happiness depended entirely on his continuing to hold the reins of government; and this advice was too consonant to the actual views of Augustus not to be readily embraced.

This seeming moderation, however, increased the popularity of Augustus, and even paved the way for an extension of his power. The censorship had, for many years, fallen into disuse. Under the pretence of effecting a reformation of various abuses in the several orders of the community, Augustus requested that he might be invested with censorial powers; and having obtained this office, he introduced many improvements in the different departments of the government, which, although salutary in themselves, contributed much to the increase of his own authority. With this daily augmentation of power, he was not without continual alarms for his personal safety. He was naturally timid, and the fate of Cæsar was ever before him. For a considerable time, he never went to the senate house without a suit of armour under his robe; he carried a dagger



in his girdle; and was always surrounded by ten of the bravest of the senators, on whose attachment he could thoroughly depend. It was much to the credit of Augustus that he reposed an unlimited confidence in Mecænas—a most able minister, and one who, with the firmest attachment to his sovereign, appears to have always had at heart the interest and happiness of the people. It was by his excellent counsels that Augustus was taught to assume those virtues to which his nature was a stranger; it was to the patronage of Mecænas that literature and the fine arts owed much of their encouragement and consequent progress; it was by his instructions, by the counsels he inculcated, that the base and inhuman Octavius was transformed into the affable and human Augustus.

In the seventh year of his consulate, Augustus again pretended a desire to abdicate, and he actually informed the senate that he had resigned all authority; but he was now secure of the consequences of this avowal. From those mercenary voices which had, no doubt, been, behind the scenes, well trained to this hypocritical farce, there was now one universal cry of supplication, entreating him not to abandon that republic which he had preserved from destruction, and whose existence depended on his paternal care. "Since it must be so," said he, "I accept the empire for ten years, unless the public peace and tranquillity shall permit me before that time to seek that ease and retirement which I so passionately desire." He would not even consent to take the burden of

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the whole empire, but entreated that the senate and people should govern a part of the provinces. From the distribution which followed, we learn the extent of the Roman empire at this time. Augustus reserved for his own government Italy, the two Gauls, Spain, Germany, Syria, Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Egypt. To the senate and people were allotted *Africa Proper*, Numidia, Libya, Bithynia, Pontus, Greece, Illyria, Macedonia, Dalmatia, and the islands of Crete, Sicily, and Sardinia. The provinces of which Augustus retained the government *direct* were those where the *legions* were principally stationed!

The title of Consul, which had been of assistance, at first in disguising his power, was now judged unnecessary by Augustus; and the annual ceremony of the renewal of this dignity perhaps recalled too strongly to the minds of the people the irrevocable tenure by which he held it. He resigned it, therefore, in the eleventh year of his consulate; and, as a compensation for this exercise of moderation, the people entreated him to accept of the office of Perpetual Tribune. By this refined policy, every increase of power seemed, so far from any encroachment upon his part, to be forced upon him by the anxious entreaty of the people. In virtue of this last office, he became in all causes, civil as well as criminal, the supreme judge. Formerly in the republic there had never been recognized any right of appeal from any of the courts to the tribunes, but the people, who had always till now considered themselves as possessing the supereminent right of appeal, now

voluntarily conferred it upon their perpetual tribune, as their chief magistrate and virtual representative.

Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus, to whom he had given his daughter in marriage, and whom he destined for his successor—a personage of great promise—died at this time, to the unspeakable regret of the Roman people, in the very flower of his youth. He had just completed his twentieth year, and in his talents and disposition had begun to show every indication of a great and a generous prince. He has been immortalized by Virgil in that exquisite eulogium, with which all are acquainted, in the sixth book of his *Æneid*.

Marcus Agrippa was the man who seemed to stand next to this amiable youth in the affection of the emperor. Agrippa had married the niece of Augustus; but, on the death of Marcellus, he caused him to divorce her, and in return gave him his daughter, the widow of Marcellus, in marriage. This lady was the infamous Julia, who afterwards became so openly scandalous in her amours, that her father, after informing the senate of his reasons, condemned her to banishment.

Notwithstanding the absolute authority now possessed by Augustus, it was still the policy of this monarch to retain all the exterior forms of a republic. The elections of magistrates were punctually held in the Comitia. Consuls were, as usual, annually chosen; and the republic retained its ædiles, its tribunes, its quæstors, and prætors. In the government of Augustus, and in the gradual increase of his authority, the prince, to all appearance, derives his power from the people.

After a little, we shall observe the emperor affecting to conceal this truth; and in the sequel, it will be totally forgotten.

While Augustus had thus, step by step, arrived at the summit of power, his son-in-law Agrippa had entirely brought under subjection the Spanish peninsula, where, for nearly two centuries, the Romans had been compelled to a continual struggle. Augustus, to secure his own authority, by firmly attaching to himself so able a general, associated him with himself in the office of censor. The two censors immediately applied themselves with great vigour to the reformation of abuses. Augustus, perhaps not hypocritically, affected the highest regard to the purity of public morals, although in his own private life he is known to have been profligate and vicious.

The tenth year, the period which he had appointed for laying down his authority, had now arrived. He accordingly did so, and, at the earnest entreaty of the people, again resumed it; and so fond does he appear to have been of this solemn farce, that five times in the course of his government he amused the nation with this empty pageantry of their pretended power. The empire was now again threatened with war, and Augustus set out for Gaul, into which the Germans had begun now to make those irruptions, which proved afterwards so fatal to the provinces. Drusus, in the meantime, defeated the Rhætians, a people inhabiting part of the modern Switzerland; and Agrippa restored peace to Asia. In marking the successive steps of despotism, it is not unnecessary to mention that this general was

the first who refused the honour of a triumph, which gave rise to this privilege belonging ever afterwards only to the emperors; and that he omitted also, for the first time, that customary form of acquainting the senate with the detail of his military operations, corresponding with Augustus alone. In these matters, of course, his example became henceforth the rule.

At this time died Marcus Agrippa, and his widow Julia now took to her third husband, Tiberius, who became thus by a double tie the son-in-law of Augustus, for the emperor had likewise married his mother Livia. Augustus was then at war with the Pannonians, Dacians, and Dalmatians. Tiberius and his brother Drusus commanded the armies against those barbarous tribes with great success, but to the deep regret of the Romans their particular favourite died in Germany, leaving three children, Germanicus, Claudius (afterwards emperor,) and Julia, married to Caius Cæsar. Caius was the son of Agrippa by Julia, whom Augustus had adopted, along with his brother Lucius. These two princes died soon after, poisoned, as it was supposed, by Livia, the wife of Augustus, to make way for the succession of her son Tiberius. This dark and ambitious man now bent all his powers to gain the confidence of Augustus, who, upon his return from a successful campaign against the Germans, not only allowed him the honour of a triumph, but associated him with himself in the government of the empire. At the request of Augustus also, the people, accustomed now to unlimited compliance, conferred upon Tiberius the government of

the provinces and the supreme command of the armies.

On the ground of his advanced age, the emperor now found an opportunity of shaking off all that dependence upon the senate and people to which his policy had hitherto confined him. He no longer came regularly to the senate, but formed a sort of privy council, consisting of twenty senators, together with the consuls of the year, and the *consules designati*; and it was determined in the senate, that the resolutions of this assembly should have the same authority as the *senatus consultia*. Augustus did not long survive this his last and boldest innovation. He died soon after at Nola, in Campania, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, after having, in conjunction with Mark Antony, ruled the Roman republic for nearly twelve, and governed alone as emperor for forty-four years.

In treating of the Roman literature, we observed that high degree of advancement to which it attained under the reign of Augustus; and we may attribute no small part of that lustre which has been thrown upon his administration, to the splendid colouring bestowed on his character by the illustrious poets who adorned his court, and repaid his favours by their incense and adulation.

“ Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona  
Multi, sed omnes illacrymabiles  
Urgentur ignotique longa  
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.”

Augustus, by his testament, had named Tiberius his heir, together with his mother Livia, and substituted to them Drusus, the son of Tiberius, and

Germanicus. Tiberius was no favourite with the body of the people. They knew him to be vicious and debauched, and of a severe and cruel disposition; yet to so low a pitch of degradation had they now fallen, that the very dread of these vices in his character operated so strongly on their servile minds as to secure his succession to the empire without a whisper of opposition. An embassy of the senators was deputed to offer him the reins of government, while he was on his return from Illyria. He received them with much affected humility; talked of the burden of so extensive an empire, and his own limited ability; pretended uncommon unwillingness to undertake so exalted an office; and, at length, after the usual ceremony of tears and supplication on the part of the senate, was at last prevailed to yield to their entreaties.

Notwithstanding these promising symptoms, this was all the mockery of moderation with which Tiberius ever condescended to flatter the prejudices of the senate or the people; for it soon after appeared that he esteemed the power enjoyed by his predecessor as much too little for his ambition. It was not sufficient for him that the substance of the republic was now gone for ever; the very appearance of it, and all those forms which recalled it to his recollection, were judged necessary to be abolished. Augustus had received from the people the power of legislation, but he left them in return the right of electing their own magistrates, and all the privileges of the comitia. Tiberius at once abolished all these formalities. The people were no longer assembled, yet the

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emperor did not choose to break entirely with the senate. He frequently affected to consult them, or, at least, to communicate to them his resolutions, and flattered them still with the possession of a shadow of authority.

The uncertainty of the laws with regard to treason gave at least to Tiberius an opportunity of discovering his natural disposition. Sylla had declared the authors of libels guilty of treason. This law had fallen into disuse under Julius Cæsar, who treated such offences with their merited contempt. Augustus had revived the law; Tiberius, with his usual dissimulation, neither renewed it nor abrogated it. The prætor having asked if he should take cognizance of such offences, the emperor vouchsafed him no other answer than that he should observe the laws; an answer which sufficiently informed the people what they had to expect, whilst Tiberius persuaded himself that he thus avoided all imputation of adopting sanguinary measures.

Meantime his nephew, Germanicus, who was acquiring great glory by his military exploits in Germany, was recalled by Tiberius, who had become jealous of his popularity with the army. The emperor sent him to the oriental provinces on the pretence of quelling some insurrections, and a short time after he died—as was suspected, of poison administered to him by command of Tiberius. Every vicious prince has his favourite, the minister of his pleasures, and the obsequious instrument of his criminal or tyrannical purposes. Ælius Sejanus was prefect of the prætorian bands, who were the emperor's guards—a body of men



amounting then to ten thousand of the flower of the troops, but who, increasing in number and in political power, became at last the sovereign disposers of the empire. Sejanus, their prefect, acquired at length so complete an ascendant over the mind of Tiberius, that he overcame the natural reserve and suspicion of his temper, and became the confidant of his most secret thoughts. It was not to be wondered at that this minion should entertain the highest views of ambition. He conceived no less a design than to exterminate the whole family of the Cæsars; and his first step was the poisoning of Drusus, the son of Tiberius, which he contrived to execute so secretly that he escaped all suspicion both of the emperor and of the people. His next design was to remove Agrippina, the widow of Germanicus, with her two sons, Nero and the younger Drusus. Sejanus accordingly represented Agrippina to Tiberius as a woman of unlimited ambition, and who secretly fomented a party of malcontents in the state, as assistants to her own aggrandizement and that of her sons. To this accusation, the natural pride and haughtiness of the temper of Agrippina gave some shadow of colour, and she and Nero, her eldest son, were condemned to banishment, whilst the younger, Drusus, was confined to prison.

Every day now produced some new information, some pretended charge of treason brought by Sejanus and his infamous minions against the most eminent persons of the court; and the idea that these informations were pleasing to the dark and vindictive mind of the emperor began to multiply them exceedingly. The constant executions

for treason, by which Sejanus was daily clearing the way for the accomplishment of his own designs, produced at length such an effect on the gloomy temper of Tiberius, that he believed his life to be in continual danger. At the instigation of Sejanus, he quitted Rome and retired to the Isle of Capræ in the Bay of Naples, carrying with him a few of the senators, and some Greek literati, in whose conversation he professed to find entertainment. It is said that in this retreat the old tyrant gave himself up to excesses in debauchery which exceed all credibility. It is certain, however, that the severity of his former manner of life was very opposite to such licentiousness of character, and we may naturally presume that the hatred of his subjects, and the concealment which he probably chose from the consideration of personal safety, have given occasion to much aspersion, or at least to great exaggerations on the subject.

Sejanus, meanwhile, had acquired an absolute authority in Rome, and was sovereign in every thing but the name. It was but a small step, to a villain of his complexion, to aim likewise at that last acquisition. He formed, therefore, a design to assassinate Tiberius; but the conspiracy was discovered. Such, however, was the influence of Sejanus, that the emperor was obliged to use art and address to bring him to punishment. He at first loaded him with caresses, and caused him to be nominated to the consulate. He then took occasion privately to sound the minds of the people, and hinted some grounds of dissatisfaction with his conduct, which instantly he per-

ceived to cool the zeal of his former flatterers and pretended friends. Convinced now of the ground on which he stood, and certain that this dreaded popularity of Sejanus was hollow, and the effect of power alone, whilst he was really detested by all ranks in the state, Tiberius deemed it time to throw off the mask. He sent, therefore, an officer to deprive him of the command of the prætorian guards; and, accusing him at the same time of treason by a letter to the senate, Sejanus was instantly arrested, condemned to death by acclamation, torn to pieces, and thrown into the Tiber. Tiberius became now more negligent than ever of the cares of government, and confusion prevailed in every department of the state. The magistracies were unsupplied, the distant provinces were without governors, and the Roman name became contemptible. The only exertions of the imperial power were manifested in public executions, confiscations, and the most complicated scenes of cruelty and rapine. At length the empire was delivered from this odious tyrant, who, falling sick at Misenum, was strangled in his bed by Macro, the new prefect, who had succeeded Sejanus in the command of the prætorian cohorts. He was put to death in the 78th year of his age, and the 23d of his reign.

One great event distinguished the reign of Tiberius. In the 18th year of that reign, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the divine Author of our religion, suffered death upon the cross, a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of mankind. It is said that soon after his death, Pilate, the Jewish governor, wrote to Tibe-

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rius an account of his passion, resurrection, and miracles, upon which the emperor made a report of the whole to the senate, desiring that Jesus might be acknowledged a God by the Romans, but that the senate, displeased that the proposal had not come from themselves, refused the emperor's request. This last circumstance utterly discredits the story, for the Roman senate dared not refuse the request of Tiberius. The progress of the Christian religion, from its first institution till the utter extinction of Paganism in the Roman empire, will form the future subject of a connected chapter.

By his testament, the emperor had nominated as his successor, Caligula, the son of Germanicus, and his grandson by adoption, together with Tiberius, the son of Drusus, and his grandson by blood. Caligula was, on his father's account, the favourite of the people, and more especially of the soldiers, amongst whom he had been educated; and the senate, to gratify the people, chose to set aside the nomination in favour of Tiberius, and to confer the sovereignty on Caligula alone. His accession to the empire gave, therefore, universal satisfaction; and, for a time, he condescended to maintain this favourable opinion by a few acts of clemency and moderation. He removed the informers who swarmed through Rome, and had been the bane of the preceding reign. He restored for a while the privileges of the Comitia, and he gratified the people still more by their favourite exhibition of public games and shows. But this dawn of sunshine soon gave place to a day of gloom and horror. Caligula, weary of dissimulation, threw off the mask

at once. Macro, the murderer of his predecessor, was too dangerous a man to continue long in that favour which this piece of service had placed him in with Caligula—he was accordingly murdered. The young Tiberius, although then no favourite of the people, might become so, when they discovered the real temper of the rival they had preferred to him. He was, therefore, speedily cut off. Caligula had abolished informations on account of treason, but he did so only to facilitate the rapidity of execution, and he now, therefore, required not the formality of an information. He put to death, without assigning even a pretence, whatever person he took a prejudice against. It is inconceivable to what excesses this monster proceeded. His whole reign, with the exception of a few months at its commencement, was one continued and complicated scene of madness and cruelty. "Caligula," says Montesquieu, "was a true sophist in his cruelty: as he was the descendant of both Antony and Augustus, he was wont to say, that he would punish both those who celebrated the anniversary of the battle of Actium, and those who did not." Upon the death of his sister Drusilla, he punished some for mourning for her, because they ought to have known she was a goddess; and put to death others for not mourning, because she was the sister of the emperor.

In addition to all this, Caligula loaded the provinces with the most excessive taxes; and such was his avarice, that every day some of the citizens fell a sacrifice in the confiscations of their property. It would only create disgust were we to

enter into any detail of the complicated and ingenious cruelties and the absurd extravagancies of a madman—of the multiplied instances of his folly as well as of his depravity—his ridiculous mock-campaigns—the temples he erected in honour of himself, where, in the character of his own priest, he offered sacrifices to himself, sometimes as Jupiter, and sometimes as Juno. One day he chose to be Mercury, the next he was Bacchus or Hercules. At last, in the fourth year of his reign, this monster met with the fate which he deserved, and was assassinated by Chæreas, a tribune of the prætorian guards, in the twenty-ninth year of his age.

The great body of the Roman people and of the senate would now have gladly preferred the restoration of the republic to the continuance of the empire; but the soldiers, who were now all-powerful, preferred a military government under an emperor, over whom they begun now to discover that they could have unlimited command. At the time when Caligula was put to death, Claudius his uncle, and the brother of Germanicus, a man whose weak and childish disposition had never cherished an ambitious thought, had concealed himself in a corner of the palace for fear of assassination. A soldier accidentally discovering his retreat, saluted him emperor. Whilst Claudius was tremblingly begging his life to be spared, some others coming up, they put him in a litter and carried him to the camp of the prætorian guards. There, as yet afraid, and uncertain of his fate, he promised to each of the soldiers a large gratification, and received in return their oaths of allegiance. The people approved the choice, and the

senate was obliged to confirm it. Thus was the empire *bought for the first time*—a practice which we shall see become in future extremely common.

Claudius at the age of fifty was still a child: his countenance was that of an idiot, and his mind, naturally weak, had never received the smallest tincture of education. He was the son of Octavia, the sister of Augustus; but as he had never been adopted, he did not belong to the family which carried the names of Cæsar and of Augustus. He assumed, however, both; and they were henceforth considered as *titles* annexed to the imperial power—the reigning emperor being always styled Augustus, and his appointed successor honoured with the title of Cæsar.

Claudius knew that, to become popular, he ought to go counter to every measure of his predecessor. He began, therefore, by abolishing most of his laws. He passed an act of oblivion for all former offences against the state, and he appeared for a while to bend his whole attention to the strict administration of justice and the establishment of good order. He even began to show symptoms of an enterprising disposition, which was quite opposite to all ideas which had been formed of his character from the tenour of his past life; and he undertook to reduce Britain under subjection to the Roman arms, which, in the opinion of Tacitus, Julius Cæsar had rather pointed out than conquered. He accordingly sent thither Plautius, one of his generals, and, encouraged by his success, was induced afterwards to go thither in person. But this was entirely an expedition of show and parade. He remained but sixteen days in the

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island, leaving his lieutenants, Plautius and Vespasian, to prosecute the war, which continued with various success for many years. The Silures or inhabitants of South Wales, under their king Caradoc or Caractacus, made a most powerful and obstinate resistance. This warlike prince, with great address and military skill, contrived to remove the seat of war into the most inaccessible parts of the country, and for nine years the Romans saw no prospect of reducing this courageous people to subjection. At length, in one unfortunate engagement, the Britons were entirely defeated; the wife and daughter of Caractacus were taken prisoners; and this brave man was afterwards treacherously delivered to the Romans by Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, in whose territories he had sought refuge. He was soon after conducted to Rome, where he displayed that noble spirit which attracted from all who beheld him at once their respect and admiration. In passing through the streets of that sumptuous capital, and observing the splendour of all the objects around him, "Alas!" exclaimed he, "is it possible that they who possess such magnificence at home should envy Caractacus his poor cottage in Britain?" He appeared undismayed before the tribunal of the emperor, and although he disdained here to sue for pardon or for mercy, yet he was willing for the good of his people to accept of it; and Claudius, it must be acknowledged, treated him with a generous humanity.

The commencement of this reign promised extremely well; but what possible dependence could there be on a man so weak as to be guided by the



lowest officers of his court? The servants and the freedmen of Claudius had such an ascendant over him, that they obtained from him the offices of the utmost importance in the empire. The meanest of his domestics were appointed judges in the different tribunals, and governors of the provinces. These dishonourable and avaricious wretches reduced peculation to a system, and filled every corner of the empire with loud complaints of their rapine and extortion. Messalina, also, the vicious and abandoned wife of Claudius, urged him on to various acts of injustice and cruelty. This woman was infamous for all manner of vices. Her debaucheries, which were quite notorious in Rome, exceed all belief; but, what is the most surprising part of her character, she had the address to pass with Claudius as a paragon of virtue. She at length, however, proceeded to that height of effrontery, that during a short absence of Claudius she publicly married Caius Silius, and upon the emperor's return, made him, by way of jest, to sign the marriage contract. Narcissus, his freedman, soon made him sensible that the matter was too serious, by informing him that the people no longer looked upon him as emperor; utterly unable to act for himself, he now entreated that Narcissus would take any steps he judged best for his interest; and his favourite, thus invested with authority, immediately secured the prætorian guards, and caused Messalina and Silius her gallant to be both put to death. Claudius now, by the advice of his faithful counsellors, his freedmen, married his niece Agrippina, the daughter of Germanicus, a woman equally vicious as Messalina, and more

daring in her crimes. Her favourite object was to secure the empire for her son Domitius Ænobarbus; and, to gain the freedmen to her interest, she made no scruple to prostitute herself to them. In the prosecution of her scheme she employed banishment, poison, murder—every different engine of vice and inhumanity. She obliged Octavia, the emperor's daughter, to marry Domitius, whom she now made Claudius adopt, to the prejudice of his son Britannicus; and Domitius was hailed Cæsar, with the titles of *Nero Claudius Cæsar Drusus Germanicus*. She gave him for his preceptor Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, from whose instructions he reaped no other benefit than an ostentatious display of taste and erudition, without possessing any tincture of either. Agrippina having, by these complicated crimes, paved the way for the succession of her son to the throne, now thought proper to make way for him by poisoning her husband; and Claudius, after a reign of fourteen years, was thus carried off at the age of sixty-three.

The succession of Nero was immediate. The captain of the prætorian guards presented him to the soldiers; he promised them a considerable donative, and in return was proclaimed emperor—the senate, with their usual passive compliance, confirming the choice. Nero began, like some of his predecessors, upon a good plan, but unfortunately it was not his own. His preceptor, the celebrated Seneca, had acquired such influence over him, that the first few years of his reign seemed to promise a revival of the times of Augustus; but his natural disposition could not long be restrained. With Seneca, who prompted his

decrees and kept him within the bounds of moderation, he appeared in public a wise and amiable prince, yet at this very time it was his favourite amusement to range through the streets of Rome with a band of young debauchees, indulging themselves in every species of outrage and disorder. His natural disposition first publicly showed itself in an indolent neglect of all the cares of government; and his mother, Agrippina, took advantage of this disposition by ruling everything as she chose. Seneca warned his pupil of the danger of allowing free course to the views of this ambitious and unprincipled woman, and his first step was to dismiss from the court her chief favourites and confidants. The violence of Agrippina prompted her to seek an outrageous revenge. She proposed to bring Britannicus to the prætorian bands, and to acknowledge before them the crimes she had committed to place Nero on the throne. The emperor prevented the execution of this purpose, by poisoning Britannicus, while he sat at supper with himself; but he sought against his mother a more refined vengeance. She was invited to Baiæ, to celebrate the feast of Bacchus. The ship in which she sailed was constructed in such a manner as to burst and fall to pieces at sea; but the machinery failed, and Agrippina came safe ashore. Nero, enraged at the disappointment of his stratagem, ordered one of his freedmen to assassinate her.

As he was now rid of those anxieties which arose from his dread of the designs of Agrippina, and had nothing material to occupy his mind, (for he disdained the proper cares of empire,) he gave a loose

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to the meanest and most vicious passions. He prompted the young nobility to exhibit themselves as actors upon the stage; he forced the Roman knights to fight, like gladiators, in the arena; and in these disgraceful amusements he bore himself a principal part. Burrhus, the captain of the prætorian guards, a man of talents and of virtue—although, at times, he had appeared to show too much compliance with the will of his master—was not, in the opinion of Nero, sufficiently obsequious, and was therefore removed by poison. Upon his death, Seneca, who lost a powerful friend, retired from the court. Nero had no longer any around him but the profligate and abandoned like himself. Poppæa, a woman of great beauty, but abandoned morals, had been seduced from her husband by Otho, who in his turn prostituted her to the emperor, to serve his own purposes of ambition. She soon gained such an ascendant over Nero, that he was induced to divorce his wife Octavia to make way for her to the throne; and such was, at this time, the infamous servility of the Roman senate, that a panegyric was pronounced in praise of the emperor, and a deputation sent to congratulate him on this auspicious event.

A conspiracy, which was at this time discovered, gave Nero ample scope for the gratification of the natural cruelty of his disposition. The slightest suspicion of guilt was now punished with immediate death. It was a sufficient crime if a man was seen to have saluted a suspected person. Seneca, amongst others, was accused of having been privy to this conspiracy; and as a mark of the emperor's gratitude for the past services of his

preceptor, he was permitted to choose the manner of his death. He chose to expire in a warm bath, after having his veins opened.

Nero, intoxicated with his own accomplishments as a gladiator and combatant in the arena, was not content with the applause of Rome: he determined now to show himself in Greece, where he contended for, and consequently gained, the prize at the Olympic and Pythian games. On his return to the Capitol he celebrated a splendid triumph, where he commanded himself to be hailed by the titles of Hercules and Apollo.

It becomes painful to enumerate a long series of extravagant instances of every variety of vice, and multiplied examples of the most complicated and capricious cruelty. The tyranny of this monster at length found an end. Vindex, an illustrious Gaul, by his interest with his countrymen as *proprætor*, excited them to a general revolt. He offered the empire to Galba, then governor of Spain, who took upon himself the title of Lieutenant of the Senate and People of Rome. The provinces declared in his favour. Rome was divided, and at length the party of Vindex prevailed. Nero, abandoned by his guards, was obliged to conceal himself in the house of one of his freedmen. The senate proclaimed him an enemy to his country, and condemned him to die *more majorem*; that is, to be scourged, thrown from the Tarpeian rock, and then flung into the Tiber. Unable to bear the thoughts of such a death, Nero tried the points of two daggers, but wanted courage to die by his own hand. He entreated the aid of one of his slaves, who was not slow in the performance of that

friendly office, and was in this manner put to death, after a reign of fourteen years, in the thirtieth year of his age; a character happily difficult to be paralleled in the annals of human nature.

In the time of the civil wars, the generals of the republic were certain of the obedience of their troops. They were devoted to their chiefs, and, although expecting a recompense, they never dared to claim it as their due. Things had now entirely changed. A long state of servitude had annihilated every generous sentiment. Even the names of the ancient Roman families were lost. The soldiers now saw nothing in Rome but a despicable senate, a servile populace, and immense riches—of which last they soon found that they were the supreme disposers. The prætorian guards had now every thing at their command. Galba was of an ancient and illustrious family. He had conducted himself honourably in the government of several of the provinces, but old age had unfortunately turned to avarice a disposition naturally economical, and his manners, rigid from his life and constitution, were now become severe and cruel. He was seventy-three years of age when he was proclaimed emperor. He had scarcely arrived in Italy, when his conduct entirely alienated the affections of the army to whom he owed his elevation. He disappointed them of the reward they expected, telling them that an emperor should choose his soldiers, and not purchase them. The people too, who, in the time of Nero, had been constantly amused with games and public shows, could not easily brook the loss of their favourite

spectacles. In other instances the new emperor scrupled not to add injustice to his imprudence. Without the form of a trial, he stripped many of the richest citizens of their fortunes, on pretence of their having been improperly acquired under Nero.

The army in Germany were the first to evince a spirit of disaffection and mutiny, and openly expressed their desire of electing another emperor. Galba began to feel his own weakness, and to be sensible that his favourite passion had impelled him into a wrong course. He wished to find a support in the abilities and talents of the young Piso, who was distinguished both by his illustrious birth and by his eminent virtues. He adopted him, therefore, as his son, and destined him to be his successor in the empire; but, unfortunately for the public welfare, this measure came too late. Otho, the husband of Poppæa, and the rival of Piso, was of a character as deservedly infamous as the other was truly respectable. He was jealous of the destined honours of Piso, and determined to risk anything to destroy him. He was immersed in debt, and had no means of escaping ruin but by some desperate attempt. It was to him a matter of indifference, he used to declare, how he died—whether by the sword of the enemy or the hand of the executioner. With this genius, and in such a disposition of mind, it was not surprising that he should harbour schemes of the highest and most daring import. He flattered his partisans by telling them that certain wise astrologers had given him a promise of the empire; and, as the securest engine of policy, he was lavish

of his promises to the soldiers. He prevailed upon some of the boldest of the guards to take the active part in accomplishing his designs. On a day appointed, they carried him to the prætorian camp, where he was proclaimed emperor. Galba and Piso were both murdered in attempting to quell the tumult, and their heads were presented to Otho, who, it is said, gave early demonstrations of his sanguinary disposition by the exultation with which he received them. Galba had only reigned for the short space of seven months.

Otho, although he had found it an easy matter to induce the senate to confirm the election of the soldiers, was not without a competitor for the empire. Before the murder of Galba, Vitellius, who commanded in Germany, had been proclaimed emperor by his troops. He had arrived at authority by the same means as Otho, with a character, if possible, yet more deeply infamous. He possessed himself no military talents; but this want was supplied by the abilities of his generals, Cæcina, and Valens. The art of war, during the long peace which had continued, with little intermission, since the accession of Augustus, was now, in some measure, lost in Italy. The prætorian guards were lazy, licentious, ignorant of their duty, and completely debauched by the successive donatives of the emperors. It was no wonder that the apprehension of a civil war should have struck terror into the breasts of all who deserved the name of Roman citizens. They had no heroes to look to for their commanders—no troops animated, as formerly, by the love of glory and of their country. There existed, however,



many degraded and desperate men, who were pleased with this prospect, in the hopes of profiting by the public ruin; whilst those cowardly minds, which composed the bulk of the citizens, were depressed with fear, or sunk in indolence and despondency.

Vitellius was at first unsuccessful in his pretensions to the empire. Cæcina and Valens did not act in concert; and Otho, had he possessed one spark of Roman spirit, would have found it easy to crush his rival in the beginning. He was resolved, at length, to hazard a decisive battle, but he had not courage to head the troops in person. His army was defeated at Bedriacum, between Mantua and Cremona, where above forty thousand men fell on each side. Otho might still have retrieved matters. Since his accession he had ingratiated himself with the soldiers, who earnestly urged him to continue the war. He had even gained, by an appearance of moderation, some affection from the people; and with these supports he might yet, by one vigorous effort, have foiled his ambitious rival. But despair had taken possession of him: his resolution was fixed, and no persuasion could alter it. For this resolution he assigned those generous motives of preventing the effusion of blood, and preserving the lives of his subjects; for which, unfortunately, the tenour of his former life will hardly permit us to give him credit. It must be owned, however, that his death was heroical. He gave his last orders with the utmost composure, provided as well as he could for the safety of his friends, whom he entreated to make a timely submission to the conqueror;

like Cato went to rest, slept with tranquillity, and, on awaking, fell upon his own sword. He had reigned for three months with considerable moderation, but the known vices of his character gave too much reason to believe that this short period of good administration would have been like the deceitful prelude of Nero.

Rome was now in the hands of a brutal tyrant, who affected no disguise to conceal his natural disposition. Vitellius was abandoned to every species of vicious debauchery. It is sufficient to paint his character to say, that he expressed a most devoted regard for the memory of *Nero*. Fortunately this reign was not of long continuance.

Vespasian, a man of obscure family, but possessed of strong native talents, had raised himself by servile offices under Caligula and Claudius, and had at length arrived at the consulship. Under Nero he had obtained the command of the army in the war against the Jews, and had conducted it with equal courage and ability. The legions he commanded in the East taking offence, very naturally, when they perceived their fellow soldiers disposing of the empire at pleasure, and enjoying in ease all the fruits of this exercise of power, thought it time for themselves, in their turn, to choose an emperor. Vespasian was persuaded by Mucianus, the governor of Syria, to offer himself a candidate, on the usual terms of a large donative. The soldiers proclaimed him, and he was immediately acknowledged over all the East. A great part of Italy submitted to his generals; and Vitellius, within a few months of his succession, saw himself reduced to the alter-

native of resigning the empire, or of dying like his predecessor. He chose the former, and immediately concluded a shameful treaty with Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, then prefect of Rome, by which he saved his life; obtaining, in return for his resignation of the empire, the liberty of retiring to Campania, with a considerable yearly pension. This treaty the dastardly emperor read himself to the people, crying all the while like a child. He then submissively prepared to strip himself of all the ensigns of authority. The spirit of the citizens was roused at this self-degradation. They compelled him to return to his palace, and attacked the party of Sabinus, who retired to the Capitol. They burnt down the temple of Jupiter, seized Sabinus, and put him to death at the feet of Vitellius. In the meanwhile Priscus, one of the generals of Vespasian, arriving with his army at the very time when the whole city was employed in the celebration of the Saturnalia, took immediate possession, without any opposition. Neither the consideration of glory nor of safety were sufficient to call off the minds of this miserable and degraded people from their favourite amusements. Vitellius was found concealed in the chamber of a slave. He was brought into the forum with a rope about his neck, loaded with reproaches, and ignominiously put to death, in the eighth month of his reign.

Vespasian was among those few princes whose character has changed for the better on their arrival at empire. Augustus, from a vicious and cruel man, became, if not a virtuous, in many respects an admirable prince. Vespasian had ingratiated him-

self by the most servile flattery with Caligula and Claudius, and raised himself by degrees from the meanest station to rank and distinction. His character, before he came to the empire, was at the best an equivocal one; but no sooner did he mount the throne, than all these suspicions were at once shown to be unfounded. He gave a general pardon to all who had been found in arms against him. He allowed every citizen, provided he spoke only of his own grievances, to have free access to his person, but declared war against that vile race of pensioned informers, which had multiplied so exceedingly during the preceding reigns. His manners were simple, but his administration evinced both vigour and discernment. It was his custom every summer, when he could procure a respite from the busy scenes of the state, to retire to a small country-house he had at Reti, where his mother lived, where he had been himself born, and which he took a pleasure to preserve in the same humble appearance in which he had known it in the days of his infancy. Under this reign, the senate, had any ancient virtue remained in that body or in Rome, might have recovered its former lustre. Vespasian communicated all affairs to that body. He also, in conjunction with his son Titus, applied himself to complete the number of the senators, as well as that of the Roman knights, which body had been diminished, and almost exterminated, by the tyranny of his predecessors.

The avarice of Vespasian is the only vice which sullies his imperial character. He renewed many of the most odious of the taxes of Galba, and

added some others equally grievous; and yet the low state of the public funds, and the laudable purposes to which he uniformly applied the public money, may perhaps form some apology for this single vice. Under this reign was terminated the war with the Jews. They had been brought under the Roman yoke by Pompey, who had taken Jerusalem; under Augustus they were for some time governed by Herod as viceroy, but the tyranny of his son Archelaus provoked Augustus to banish him, and to reduce Judæa into the ordinary state of a Roman province. The stubborn character of that people was ill fitted for obedience to governors whose religion they held in abhorrence. They were continually rebelling on the slightest occasion. Nero had sent Vespasian to reduce them into order, and he had completed the subjugation of the whole country except the capital, when he was summoned to the cares of empire. He left the charge of the war to his son Titus, who concluded it by the taking of Jerusalem. That ill-fated city, whose ruin—doomed by the Almighty, and predicted by prophets—was accomplished rather by the intemperate zeal and inflexible obstinacy of its inhabitants than by the arms of its enemies, was carried by storm, after every means had been in vain tried by the humane Titus to persuade the Jews to surrender. The temple was burnt to ashes, and the city buried in ruins.

Vespasian now shut the temple of Janus, and associated his son Titus with himself in power. He conferred upon him the command of the prætorian guards, and employed him as his counsellor

and first minister. At the age of sixty-nine he began to feel the approaches of his decay, and, falling sick, retired to his little country-seat at Reti, where, although sensible that his death was near, he continued still to occupy himself uninterruptedly with the cares of government. An emperor, he said, ought to die standing, and thus in truth died Vespasian, after a prosperous and able reign of nine years and eleven months.

His son Titus had early evinced the most favourable dispositions. The abilities of his mind were equal to his personal accomplishments, and the qualities of his heart were inferior to neither. He seemed born to form the happiness of his people. He possessed heroism sufficient to have revived the ancient splendour of the Romans, and that tempered with a humanity and moderation which are but too rarely its attendants. Such was certainly his genuine character; for those who mention a few follies of his youth, as the indications of a vicious disposition, should remember what were the manners of the courts of Claudius and Nero, in which he received his education. The intemperate follies of youth were soon abandoned for the care of his people, whose happiness became, from the moment of his accession, his only study. He removed from all employments such as were of dubious or dishonourable character. He continued in office every man of virtue whom his father had employed. Yet, with the strictness of moral feeling where it might conduce to the welfare of his people, his temper was far from being rigid. He knew the taste of the nation for their favourite amusements, and the amphitheatre

which he built was of magnificence suitable to the grandeur of the empire.

In the first year of the reign of Titus, happened that most remarkable eruption of Mount Vesuvius which overwhelmed the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and in which the elder Pliny lost his life, from an earnest curiosity to be a near witness of that striking spectacle. He had determined to embellish his "Natural History" with a description of that most interesting phenomenon, and for this purpose rushed eagerly into that situation of danger from which others were as eagerly attempting to escape. He was there suffocated by a cloud of sulphureous vapour. His nephew, the younger Pliny, has given a vivid description of this remarkable scene, in a letter to Tacitus the historian, (lib. vi. epist. 16.) Of the character of his uncle he says, with justice, "*Equidem beatos puto quibus Deorum munere datum est aut facere scribenda, aut scribere legenda; beatissimos vero quibus utrumque. Horum in numero avunculus meus.*"\* The desolation of Campania, occasioned by this terrible eruption of Vesuvius, was remedied to the utmost by the beneficence of Titus, who set apart large funds for the relief of the sufferers. In order to judge of their losses, he went himself to Campania, and, by a kind of fatality, whilst absent on this benevolent expedition, a fire, which broke out in the city,

\* "I esteem those the truly happy of mankind to whom the gods have allotted either to do things worthy of being written, or to write things worthy of being read. The happiest are they who have done both; and among those was my relative."

desolated a great part of Rome. The losses occasioned to his subjects, by these reiterated calamities, he repaired at his own charges, not from the public money, which is generally the treasury of the prince's bounties, but from the sale of the superfluous ornaments and riches of his palaces. Thus this virtuous prince occupied himself by every means which generosity or benevolence could dictate, in diffusing happiness amongst all classes of his subjects, when, to their unspeakable regret, he was cut off in the third year of his reign. He died at the age of forty, leaving behind him that most merited and exalted epithet, *Deliciæ humani generis*—"the delight of the human race."

Titus was suspected to have been poisoned by his brother Domitian, a character in every respect the reverse of his. The monster—for such his life declared him—contrived, like some of his unworthy predecessors, for a while to conceal his vices. He affected to show a moderation and a love of justice, which gave promise of a happy reign; but his natural disposition soon unveiled itself. An insurrection, which happened at that time in Germany, gave him an opportunity of satiating himself with blood. The rebellion itself was speedily quelled, but its consequences were long dreaded, in the innumerable murders of the most respected among the citizens, for which the bare suspicion of having been concerned in the rebellion afforded always a sufficient pretext.

Informers, that despicable brood, the scourge of men of worth, began again to swarm throughout the country; slaves were bribed to give evidence against their masters; pretenders to astrology



were appointed to draw the horoscopes of the principal citizens, the emperor ordering those to be put to death to whom fortune promised anything great or successful.

Could the people have slept in quiet under the constant dread of a sentence of death, they might have been abundantly gratified in their darling amusements of games and shows. In these the new emperor squandered prodigious sums; but the expenses were in truth furnished by the unhappy citizens, whom he loaded with the most exorbitant taxes. It was the lot of Domitian, as of other tyrants, to be haunted by the continual dread of assassination. Fortunately for the world, his fears were at last realized; a conspiracy was formed in the heart of his palace, the empress, as is said, conducting the plot, and he was assassinated after a cruel and inglorious reign of fifteen years. Under this reign flourished Martial the epigrammatist, from whose venal praises if we were to judge of the character of Domitian, we should believe him one of the best and greatest of princes.

In the time of Domitian the empire was engaged in a variety of wars; the only one of these which ended honourably for the Romans was that carried on in Britain. A detail of its operations belongs more properly to the sketch which we shall have to give of the earliest periods of the history of our own country. The conspirators who had put to death Domitian raised Cocceius Nerva to the throne. He was born at Narni, in Umbria, of a Cretan family, and was the first emperor who was not a Roman. He was, when elected, approaching to the age of seventy—a man, certainly,

of worth and virtue, but too weak for the burden of government. His pliant disposition permitted all excesses. Under Domitian everything was construed into a crime; under the reign of Nerva nothing. The troops, who were fond of Domitian's memory, because he had been lavish of his bounties, demanded that his murderers should be punished. Nerva had not the resolution to refuse, and they put to death, under his eyes, those very persons who had given him the empire. Conscious of his own weakness, he, in order to secure himself upon the throne, adopted the virtuous Trajan, who was then carrying on war in Pannonia, and had never entertained any views of such exaltation. The empire was governed for some months by Trajan, till the death of Nerva, which happened soon after. He had reigned only sixteen months.

Trajan was, in every respect, worthy of the throne, for he possessed all those peculiar talents and those higher virtues which ought to adorn a sovereign. He was born of a respectable though not an ancient family:—his father had been consul. He perfectly understood the art of war, and he soon re-established, upon his succeeding to the empire, the ancient military discipline, which, of late, had been nearly forgotten. He marched always on foot, at the head of his troops; underwent every fatigue in common with them, and shared the same simple fare. Under such a general, it is no wonder the Roman arms should have regained their ancient splendour. His first war was against the Dacians, to whom Domitian had pusillanimously subjected the em-

pire to pay an annual tribute. Trajan shook off this shameful imposition, and in a few campaigns entirely subdued that warlike nation. A lasting monument of his victories in the Dacian war still remains in that magnificent column at Rome which bears the name of Trajan, and which is decorated with his exploits in beautiful sculpture.

Chosroes, king of the Parthians, had disposed of the crown of Armenia. Trajan, considering this as an invasion of the rights of the Roman empire, marched against him, subdued his whole territories, took his capital of Ctesiphon, and brought under submission Mesopotamia, Syria, and Arabia Felix. This love of conquest he, however, carried too far; and it was the more blameable in a prince who had every requisite for rendering his people happy under the blessings of peace. It is said, that he regretted he was not as young as Alexander, that he might have vied with him in the extent of his conquests. He should have rather remembered, that the empire was already too large, and felt the difficulty of defending its extensive frontier. Yet, influenced as he was by this ruling passion, his attention to the cares of government, and his management of all matters connected with the state, were truly admirable. It was customary for the emperor to be named consul the year following his accession. Trajan refused it, as he was then at a distance in the provinces. On his return, he went through all the forms of the ancient procedure for the election of magistrates, with the utmost scrupulousness. These had long been discontinued by

his predecessors. He called the comitia, presented himself as a candidate, and at his election, besides the customary oaths, he invoked the powers of Heaven to strengthen him in the performance of his duty.

He was liberal in his donations to the people, but they were not, like those of other emperors, the mean bribes of a despot; they were the largesses of a beneficent prince, for the support of the wretched and indigent. The children of the poor were educated at his expense, and it was computed that two millions of destitute persons were maintained from his private purse. These charges were supplied by a well-ordered economy in his own fortune, and a regular administration of the public finances. He lived himself always with ancient simplicity, and he enriched the state by a careful attention to the minutest articles of public expenditure. Under this excellent mode of government every thing enjoyed its due consideration. The literary ornaments of the court of Trajan were Pliny the younger, the poet Juvenal, and those excellent writers, Tacitus and Plutarch. Their talents and genius were encouraged and liberally rewarded, whilst the fine arts also were assiduously cultivated, and flourished under that generous spirit of freedom and independence which prevailed throughout every branch of the state. Trajan himself, amidst the duties of sovereignty, enjoyed the greatest happiness which could belong to a private station. He walked through the streets of Rome, without guard or attendant, as a private individual, more secure in the love and affection of his subjects, than in

the strength of an imperial retinue. He lived with his friends on terms of the most familiar intercourse; he shared in all their amusements; and there was between them an interchange of every kind and affectionate duty. Such was the virtuous and venerable Trajan, whose character so justly merited the surname universally given him, *Trajanus Optimus*. He died at the age of sixty-three, after a reign of nineteen years, a period during which Rome may be said to have been truly happy.

Ælius Adrianus, on the pretence of having been adopted by Trajan in his last moments, took advantage of his command of the army then at Antioch, and prevailed with them to proclaim him emperor. Trajan had been his tutor, and had given him his grand-niece in marriage. These circumstances gave a colourable title to his pretence of adoption, and the senate, therefore, did not think proper to dispute his right. It was the first measure of his reign to abandon all the conquests of Trajan. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign; established Chosroes in his dominions; withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria; and, in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more confined the Eastern empire within the bounds of the Euphrates. For this conduct various motives have been assigned. It has been ascribed to envy of the glory of his predecessor; but Gibbon justly observes, that he could scarcely place the superiority of Trajan in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal even to

retain what the former had subdued. Indolence, and an aversion to war, have been brought forward as his motives, but Adrian was, in fact, an excellent soldier, equally fearless of danger or of fatigue. It is certainly more natural and reasonable to ascribe to policy and prudence, a measure which eventually was conducive to the happiness and security of the state. The Parthians, he well knew, could not, from the natural strength of their country, be long kept under the yoke. Adrian foresaw in Parthia the future cradle of numerous and destructive wars, and he preferred the peace and security of the empire to this destructive prospect.

On his return to Rome, his conduct was such as to ingratiate himself with every rank of the citizens. He remitted all the debts due to the treasury for the last sixteen years, by burning the records and obligations. He bestowed liberal presents upon those amongst the ancient families who had fallen into indigence, and appointed new funds for the maintenance and education of the children of the poor. He then undertook a progress through all the provinces of the empire, repressing abuses, and studiously relieving the people wherever he found the taxes too heavy or exorbitant. He rebuilt many cities which had been destroyed or had fallen into ruin. Amongst the rest, he rebuilt Jerusalem, which he named *Ælia Capitolina*. In these progresses through his dominions, so careful was he in avoiding every thing which might distress the provinces, that he used no equipage or show, but travelled on foot, and lived with the frugality of a common

soldier. This exemplary conduct made him beloved and respected by his subjects, as much as he was formidable to the enemies of the empire from his courage and resolution. His popularity became so great, that he stood not in need of the ensigns of power and authority. The guards, and the fasces, he deemed superfluous to him who made it his study to reign, not over the persons, but over the hearts of his subjects. Although, certainly, a few instances of severity had clouded the commencement of his reign, yet these were dictated by necessity, whilst his authority was insecure. No sooner was he firmly seated on the throne, than his clemency and bounty were extended to all ranks of his subjects. To the talents of an experienced captain and a skilful politician, Adrian joined an excellent taste in the liberal arts, and a strong disposition towards the advancement of science and polite literature. He was an admirer of poetry, music, and painting, and was himself a proficient in those arts. He seemed endowed with a universal genius, not only being eminent for those nobler qualities which constitute the higher virtues of an emperor, but for those inferior, but not less attractive, graces which accompany an accomplished and cultivated mind. Envy has certainly stained the memory of this great prince with some immoralities; but, as for the truth of these there appears no foundation, it is becoming in the historian rather to bury them in oblivion, than to transmit even the suspicion of them to posterity. On the whole, the reign of Adrian was to the Roman people a period of unusual splendour, attended with what it seldom

brings along with it—uncommon public happiness.

In the twenty-second and last year of his reign, he adopted and declared for his successor, Titus Aurelius Antoninus, a man of exemplary character and exalted merit. But not satisfied with this immediate instance of regard for posterity, he declared Aurelius his successor, on condition that he should, in his turn, adopt Annius Verus, a young man every way worthy of the throne, and to whom it should descend on his decease. These two were the Antonines, who for forty years governed the Roman empire with consummate wisdom, ability, and rectitude. Soon after having made this valuable bequest to his country, Adrian fell into a lingering and mortal disease. It was under the pressure of this disease, and in full conviction of his approaching dissolution, that he wrote those beautiful and well-known lines addressed to his soul, which bear so strongly the mark of a tranquil and philosophic mind convinced of its immortality, but anxious for its unknown destination.

*Animula vagula, blandula,  
Hospes, comesque corporis,  
Quæ nunc abibis in loca;  
Pallidula, frigida, nudula—  
Nec ut soles dabis joca?\**

We have now arrived at the age of the Antonines, the short remaining period of the union and prosperity of the Roman empire.

\* Pope's translation of these lines is in everybody's hands.



## CHAPTER II.

Age of the Antonines—Commodus—Pertinax—The Prætorian Guards sell the Empire by auction—Four Emperors proclaimed—Severus marches to Rome and disbands the Prætorian Guards—War in Britain—Severus dies at York—Caracalla—Disorders in the Empire continue till the Reign of Dioclesian—Constantine—His zeal for Christianity.

THE reign of Antoninus Pius offers but few remarkable events to the pen of the historian, as, indeed, generally do such reigns as are the most happy. His character was that of the true philosopher, and the father of his people. He was likewise an excellent politician, and his attention to the cares of the state was indefatigable. Amongst others of his wise regulations may be reckoned that law which prohibited any person once acquitted to be tried again for the same crime. Generous to others, and himself perfectly disinterested, he bestowed his whole private fortune in repairing the losses and alleviating the calamities of the wretched. As he was secure of his authority, which was firmly seated in the affections of his people, he had no mean jealousy of the power of his ministers and magistrates: he raised the dignity and character of the senate, by regulating his own conduct according to its directions in the administration of all public affairs. The love and esteem

of his subjects were only equalled by the respect entertained for his character by foreign nations. He was made the umpire of the differences of contending states, and received the voluntary homage of princes over whom he had no other authority than what the admiration of his wisdom and eminent virtues bestowed. This excellent prince, the idol of his subjects, died in the seventy-fourth year of his age, after a happy and prosperous reign of twenty-two years. He had, in the beginning of his reign, given his daughter Faustina, together with the title of Cæsar, to his successor, who had been pointed out by Adrian, Annius Verus, a man in every respect worthy to fill his place.

Annius was of an ancient and honourable family. On his accession to the empire, he changed this name for that of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and he bestowed that of Verus upon Lucius Commodus, his brother by adoption. The Stoical philosophy was, at this time, in Rome the most prevalent of all the sects. It gained credit with men of worth and probity, from its opposition to the licentious manners of the times. Marcus Aurelius was by nature attached to this philosophy, still more than by education. His morals were pure, his manners simple, and his virtues the result of his natural disposition. His "Meditations," which are still extant, and which were composed amidst the tumult of a military life, abound with the most exalted and beautiful sentiments of piety and morality.

Antoninus had preferred M. Aurelius to Lucius Verus, with whose vicious disposition he was well acquainted. Yet the generosity of Marcus made

him hasten to admit this unworthy brother to a share in the empire—an action which can admit of no justification. Rome had now, in fact, two emperors; and those who loved their country prayed as earnestly for the life of Marcus Aurelius as they did that Verus might not survive him. The Parthians, judging the death of Antoninus Pius a favourable opportunity to attack the empire, entered Armenia, and there cut to pieces the Roman army. They proceeded thence to ravage Syria, and an inroad was made at the same time by the Catti into Germany. Marcus Aurelius sent L. Verus against the Parthians, but that debauched and abandoned youth trusted to his generals the whole conduct of the expedition, whilst he himself spent his time between Antioch and Laodicea in the lowest excesses. His generals, however, were victorious, and he, proud of the laurels he had not won, returned at the head of his troops into Italy, where he carried with him a most dreadful pestilence which almost depopulated that country, and continued to rage for many years from province to province through the whole empire.

During this calamity many of the German nations took up arms—the Vandals, Dacians, Quadi, Suevi, and Alemanni. They laid waste Pannonia, and thence penetrated into Greece, where they ravaged even the Peloponnesus. In this concurrence of misfortunes, the public finances were exhausted to afford the requisite succours; and Aurelius, instead of the usual resource of increasing the taxes, adopted the generous expedient of divesting himself of his whole fortune to

supply the deficiency, and sold for the public benefit even the furniture of his palaces. It was necessary to take immediate measures for reducing the rebellion in Germany. The emperor, who had now experienced the disposition of L. Verus, could neither venture to trust him with the command of the army, nor with the equally important task of governing Rome in his absence. He therefore, in concert with the senate, obtained from them a decree, that both the Augusti should march against the revolted nations. They accordingly set out together for Aquileia, but Marcus Aurelius was in a few months happily deprived of his colleague, and the empire of its fears, by the death of Verus. Of this German war historians have furnished us with no detail; Marcus Aurelius, we know, finished it in a few campaigns, and had granted the rebellious nations favourable terms of peace, when he was recalled to Italy by the revolt of Avidius Cassius, who, upon a false report of his death, had caused himself to be proclaimed emperor. This insurrection, however, was speedily terminated by the death of Cassius, who was murdered by one of his own officers.

Aurelius now undertook a progress into Asia, where some disorders had made his presence necessary. Here he received the homage of all the eastern nations. He appeared, says an ancient author of that time, like a benevolent deity, diffusing around him universal peace and happiness; he was absent from Rome seven years, and his return was celebrated by the sincerest joy of his people.

His last military expedition was against the

Marcomanni, and others of the German nations, who had again taken up arms. He had proceeded far to the reduction of these obstinate rebels, whom he must soon have brought under subjection, when, to the unspeakable grief and loss of the empire, he died in Pannonia, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and the nineteenth of his reign. His memory was long revered by posterity, and above a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Aurelius among their household gods. From the death of Domitian, which happened in the 96th year of the Christian era, to that of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, which took place in the 180th, a period of eighty-four years, the Roman empire had enjoyed the greatest prosperity and happiness. It was governed by absolute power, but this power was under the direction of wisdom and virtue. "The armies," says Gibbon, "were restrained by the firm, yet gentle hand of five successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom."

Commodus was born soon after the elevation of his father Marcus Aurelius to the throne. He inherited none of the virtues of Aurelius, but resembled much his mother Faustina, a princess second only to Messalina in every species of vice.

It was almost the only weakness of M. Aurelius, that he was blind to the infamous character of his wife and son. He even conferred honours and titles on those whom all but himself knew to be the acknowledged gallants of Faustina; and by a blameable innovation, he had caused his son Commodus to be declared Augustus in his own lifetime. Commodus was in his twentieth year, when, by the death of his father, he succeeded to the throne. His first step was to purchase a disgraceful peace with the barbarians in Germany—impatient to get rid, without the fatigue of fighting, of the trouble of a war. From his infancy he had discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and an excessive attachment to the amusements of the populace, the sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. It was his highest and only ambition to excel in these exercises: he fought as a common gladiator in the circus; and his favourite epithet was that of the Roman Hercules, which is still to be seen upon his coins and medals. His whole conduct was equally odious and contemptible, and the public measures of his reign consist of nothing but the detection of some conspiracies which the hatred of his subjects and his own cruelty and inhumanity could not fail to excite. One conspiracy, at length, delivered the empire of its tyrant. His concubine Marcia, his chamberlain, and the commander of his guard, had ventured to remonstrate with him on the indecency of an emperor displaying himself as a combatant in the public games. This was an offence which could not be forgiven, and he ac-

cordingly determined their immediate destruction. Marcia found the list of his intended victims written in his own hand. She made haste to anticipate his purpose, and caused this worthless and inglorious wretch to be strangled, in the thirty-second year of his age and the thirteenth of his reign.

Lætus, captain of the prætorian guards, who had conducted the conspiracy which rid the world of Commodus, bestowed the empire on Publius Helvetius Pertinax, a man of obscure extraction, but who, by his virtues and military talents, had raised himself to rank and esteem. The soldiers were promised a large donative, and the people, who respected the character of Pertinax, recognized him for their sovereign with the utmost demonstrations of joy. He applied himself immediately to the reformation of the abuses introduced by his predecessor, but his zeal for this reformation transported him beyond the bounds of prudence. The prætorian guards, debauched and effeminate in their morals and constitution, bore with great impatience the severity of that discipline to which they were now subjected, and regretted the happy licentiousness of the former reign. Lætus, the prefect, who expected that his services would entitle him to rule as a favourite minister, was disappointed by the austerity of the government of Pertinax. These discontents soon increased to such a degree as to become insurmountable; and the too virtuous Pertinax, after a reign of only eighty-six days, was openly murdered in the palace by the same hands which had placed him on the throne.

A transaction followed which was shameful beyond example: Sulpicianus, the father-in-law of Pertinax, demanded the empire from the prætorians, who replied to him, that he should have his chance for it at a fair auction, as they had resolved to bestow it on the highest bidder. Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, was at table when this intelligence was brought him. His wife, and the parasites who surrounded him, persuaded him he should embrace this opportunity of ascending a throne, which his virtues had long merited. He repaired instantly to the prætorian camp, and, bidding at once a considerable sum beyond the offer of Sulpicianus, he was immediately proclaimed emperor. The obsequious senate made no scruple to confirm this election. He took his way to the palace, where, it is said, the first object which struck his eyes was the headless trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment which had been prepared for his supper. He viewed both with equal indifference, for he foresaw not what awaited him.

The people, not yet lost to every sense of their own importance, considered this measure as the last and severest insult on the Roman name. They gave free vent to their opinions; they openly execrated Didius as a usurper, and invited the legions in the provinces to assert the injured dignity of the empire. Amongst the generals who commanded these distant legions was Porsennius Niger. He was at that time in the government of Syria, when he received the request of the people to avenge the murder of Pertinax. The people of Asia solicited him to assume the purple



himself, and he was easily prevailed upon. But at the same time that he was proclaimed in Asia, Decimus Clodius Albinus was proclaimed by the troops in Britain, and Septimus Severus in Illyria. Albinus, of known courage but of doubtful moral character, was sprung from one of the noblest families in Rome. Severus, an African by birth, owed his favour with the soldiers in a great measure to the high regard he had always professed for the character of Pertinax; but above all, to the promise of a donative superior to the price at which the wealthy Didius had purchased the empire. Saluted by his soldiers with the highest acclamations, and hailed by the title of Augustus, Severus marched directly to Rome. The prætorians, on the news of his approach, immediately abandoned Didius to his fate; and the senate, without ceremony, condemned him to be executed in the imperial palace. He reigned sixty-six days.

The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who conducted in a few days a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tiber, proves at once, as Gibbon has remarked, the uncommon plenty produced at this time by the agriculture and commerce of the empire, the good state of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent, subdued temper of the provinces.

Severus immediately ordered the corrupted and insolent troops of the prætorians to assemble unarmed on a large plain without the city. They obeyed, in terror for their fate. He caused them to be surrounded with the Illyrian legions, and then sharply reproaching them with the murder

of Pertinax, and the disgraceful sale of the empire (which he and his troops had, however, so accurately imitated,) he dismissed them with ignominy from their trust, and banished the whole of them, on pain of death, to the distance of one hundred miles from Rome. He then created a new guard, which he composed of soldiers of all different countries.

Matters in the meantime wore an unfavourable aspect in the extremities of the empire. Both the east and west were in arms against Severus. Finding himself unable at the same time to march against both, he endeavoured to secure the friendship of Albinus, by appointing him his successor in the empire, with the title of Cæsar; and having thus conciliated this powerful rival, he instantly marched against Niger in Asia. The armies soon met; and by the successful issue of three battles, in one of which Niger lost his life, he found himself without a rival, and master of the empire. His victories were succeeded by a conduct little short of that of a Marius or an Octavius. His proscription almost exterminated the army of Niger; and the miserable remnant which escaped were driven to seek shelter amongst the Parthians, to whom they taught the use of the Roman arms.

Severus was now no longer under the necessity of keeping terms with Albinus. He deprived him accordingly of the title of Cæsar, evincing clearly that it had been from necessity, not choice, he had ever bestowed it. Provoked at this usage, Albinus assumed a more illustrious denomination, caused himself to be proclaimed emperor, and marched for Italy. Fortune still attended the arms of

Severus; he defeated Albinus in a decisive battle near Lyons; and this general, anticipating the fate which awaited him, preferred dying by his own hand. The temper of Severus, naturally cruel, found many victims in those who had favoured the parties of his rival competitors. He examined the papers of Albinus, and thence found pretexts for sacrificing forty of the senators. He seemed to take pleasure in degrading that order, and his intention seemed to be to extinguish every trace of the ancient republican administration, and erect the perfect fabric of an absolute monarchy. It became, therefore, his object to gain the affection of the soldiers, whom he attached to himself by every favour which he could bestow. Nor was his policy less conspicuous in the employment of men of talents, who in their writings and discourses instilled into the minds of the people the doctrines of passive obedience, and the duty of absolute submission to the will of their master. Dion Cassius, the historian, appears to have been commissioned to form these opinions into a system; and the Pandectæ of the Roman law afford evidence that the advocates and judges co-operated all to the same end.

Having thus secured his authority by every precaution which he esteemed necessary, he applied himself, with a policy certainly both able and praiseworthy, to promote the interests of the empire. His conduct in the administration of justice was exemplary. His laws were wise and judicious, and the fame of the Roman arms in no period since the republic had risen higher

than in the reign of Severus. He delighted to affirm, and he had reason certainly to glory in it, that having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it in profound, universal and honourable peace. To the military and political talents of Severus was added a taste for the fine arts, more especially for architecture. The most eminent of the civil lawyers flourished under his reign—Ulpian, Paulus, and Papinian, who brought the system of Roman jurisprudence to its highest perfection.

Severus had two sons, Caracalla and Geta, who distinguished themselves in their infancy by a fixed and implacable hatred against each other. This unhappy and unnatural discord clouded the latter days of Severus. With a view of obviating the evil effects which the flattery of a court produced on their minds, the emperor seized the occasion of the war in Britain to carry them along with him, after associating them both with himself in the empire. Severus was at this time sixty years of age, and enfeebled with disease. The Caledonians, under the command of Fingal, invaded the Roman frontier, and defeated, on the banks of the river Carron, Caracalla, whom Ossian names *the son of the king of the world*. During the course of this war in Britain, it is shocking to relate that the abandoned Caracalla more than once attempted the life of his father, who, at length, broken by disease, died at York, in the 211th year of the Christian era. Caracalla and Geta agreed to divide the empire, the former retaining the western part, and the latter Asia

and the eastern provinces. The mutual hatred of these two brothers was now fomented by their association in the government. Caracalla, at length worn out by the struggle, and unable to bear longer with his rival, caused him to be openly assassinated in the arms of his mother Julia, and had the address to persuade the people that he was compelled to this atrocious deed by motives of self-preservation. On this subject Ælius Spartianus has transmitted a fact, which strongly marks the degeneracy of the Roman character, and that abject servility with which the highest ranks of the state submitted to the yoke of tyranny.

Caracalla, after the death of his brother Geta, thought it necessary to apologize to the senate for a deed so dark and unnatural. He ordered a body of his guards to enter the senate-house, and two armed soldiers to post themselves at the side of every senator. Then gravely walking up to the consul's chair, he pronounced a studied harangue, setting forth the imperious necessity of the action, and urging that his concern for the interests of the state had, in this single instance, overcome his fraternal affection and the humanity of his nature. It may be believed that the Conscrip Fathers were in no disposition to dispute the force of his arguments. Caracalla was now proclaimed sole emperor, and one of the first acts of his administration was to put to death the celebrated lawyer Papinian, who had refused to justify his conduct to the people. His reign, which was nothing but one continued scene of most complicated cruelties, was at last terminated by the assassination of the tyrant, in the sixth year of his government.

Those disorders in the empire which, as we have seen, began with the reign of Commodus, continued for about a century, till the accession of Diocletian. That interval was filled up by the reigns of Helio-gabalus, Alexander Severus, Maximin, Gordian, Decius Gallus, Valerianus, Gallienus, Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, and Carus. The history of those reigns has been brilliantly given by Gibbon: and pleasure and profit must ever accompany the productions of that able, though sometimes dangerous pen; but our plan confines us necessarily to such general views as furnish useful lessons of the knowledge of mankind, and, excluding all minuteness of detail, looks only to those circumstances which may tend to illustrate the great doctrines of politics or of morality. In that catalogue of names which we enumerated, Valerian, a prince of considerable virtues, but enfeebled by age before he attained the empire, was the first of the Roman emperors who perished in captivity. In an unsuccessful expedition against Sapor, king of Persia, he was taken prisoner, treated, as is said, with every circumstance of indignity, and languished the remainder of his days in misery. During the reign of his son Gallienus, there were actually nineteen pretenders to the sovereignty of different parts of the Roman empire. One of these, a native of Palmyra, Odenathus, by an effectual opposition to the progress of Sapor in Syria, was the preserver of that valuable province. Gallienus, sensible of his merits, conferred on him the title of Augustus; and Odenathus, like an independent sovereign, bequeathed at his death his crown to his widow

Zenobia. Claudius, the successor of Gallienus, occupied in his wars against the German nations, allowed Zenobia to reign in peace over several of the Asiatic provinces, to which she added, by conquest, the kingdom of Egypt. For five years she maintained a splendid and politic dominion. But Aurelian, the successor of Claudius, after the reduction of the Germans and the recovery of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, out of the hands of Tetricus, a bold usurper, turned the arms of the empire against this heroic queen of the East. She defended her dominions with a manly spirit, and maintained a siege in her capital of Palmyra, which for a while baffled the utmost efforts of the Roman arms. The city, however, at length surrendered, and Zenobia attempting to escape by flight upon the back of a dromedary, was taken and conveyed a prisoner to Aurelian. He brought the captive princess to Rome, where she, together with Tetricus, graced the triumph of Aurelian; the queen bound in fetters of gold. The emperor assigned her an elegant villa, near Rome, for her residence. The Syrian queen gradually sunk into a Roman matron; her daughters married into Roman families; and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century.

The succeeding reigns of Tacitus, Probus, and Carus, occupy a space of nine years, in the first seven of which—the reigns of Tacitus and Probus—the Roman empire was seen in a state both of splendour and of happiness. To Carus succeeded Diocletian, who began his reign in the 284th year of the Christian era, and who soon evinced himself a prince of the greatest talents

in every respect, but more especially as a politician. He may be considered, like Augustus, as the founder of a new empire. By birth a Dalmatian, and of mean extraction, he had yet raised himself, by his merit, to the supreme command in the army, and, having gained the empire, he determined to govern it by a new system of administration. He divided into four different governments the whole of the imperial dominions, and all the departments of authority civil and military. There were appointed to these, four different governors, with equal powers. Diocletian associated Maximian with himself as his colleague in the empire, with the title of Augustus; and bestowed on his two generals, Galerius and Constantius, the titles of Cæsars.

The four princes had each their distinct department: Galerius was stationed on the Danube, to guard the Illyrian provinces; Constantius had the command of Gaul, Spain, and Britain; Maximian that of Italy and Africa; and Diocletian of Thrace, Egypt, and the Asiatic provinces. Each was supreme in his own district, and, what is truly singular, and evinces the talents of Diocletian, all lived in harmony, and in the most perfect good understanding with each other. This plan of dividing the empire was evidently a bad one in itself, nor could it possibly have been supported but by the superior and controlling genius of Diocletian. He allotted, in appearance, an equality of powers to his colleagues; but, in fact, the eminence of his own character and the superiority of his genius gave him always a decided superiority, and the other princes were little more than his viceroys



or lieutenants. At times he would make them understand this even with arrogance and harshness. Galerius had been defeated by the Persians, on which occasion Diocletian treated him with the utmost contempt, making him follow his chariot on foot; nor was he restored to favour till he had by his successes regained his credit, and with this an equality of power.

Under the reign of this emperor, all vestiges of the ancient liberty of the Roman constitution were entirely annihilated. The sovereign assumed that ensign of royalty most odious to the Romans, the diadem, and introduced at home all the magnificent ceremonial of the Persian court. The name of the Senate of Rome continued to be respected, but this body ceased to have the smallest weight or influence in affairs of state. By the vigour of Diocletian's administration, and the active abilities of his associates in power, the Roman arms regained for a while their ancient splendour, and general good order pervaded the empire. It was during this reign, also, that the northern barbarians, who for some time before had made themselves known by some partial irruptions, poured down in prodigious swarms upon the extremities of the empire. The Scythians, Goths, Sarmatians, Alani, and Quadi, began to make dreadful inroads, and for a while every successive defeat seemed only to increase their strength and perseverance.

At this period, Diocletian, along with his colleague Maximian, surprised the world by resigning at once the royal dignity, and, leaving the government in the hands of the two Cæsars, voluntarily returned to the condition of private

citizens. Diocletian retired to Salona, the place of his nativity, now Spalatro, in Dalmatia, where he built a palace superior in extent and magnificence to any of his predecessors. In this seclusion from the cares of government he lived for several years, and was wont to say, that he counted the day of his retreat as the beginning of his life. Maximian, who had abdicated not from individual choice, but in consequence of a promise exacted on his admission to a share in the government, retired less willingly to Lucania. Constantius and Galerius now jointly governed the Roman empire, but soon after, Constantius died in Britain, and his son Constantine, succeeding in the command of the troops, caused himself to be proclaimed emperor in the city of York. He immediately acquainted Galerius of this event, who was by no means heartily disposed to acknowledge his nomination. On Constantine he conferred, or rather continued to him, the title of Cæsar, whilst he associated with himself in the *empire* his favourite Severus. Meanwhile, Maximian was prevailed upon by his son Maxentius to abandon his retirement, and to resume the purple. They engaged, defeated, and put to death Severus; and Maximian, to unite his interest with Constantine against Galerius, gave him his daughter in marriage, by which alliance Constantine acquired a double title to the empire. Soon after this, Maximian, for what cause is not ascertained, died by his own hand, and Galerius was carried off by a mortal disease. Maxentius and Constantine, therefore, remained upon the stage to contend for the prize of undivided empire. It

was at this time that Constantine, being converted to Christianity—(as is said, by a miraculous vision,)—the true religion, after struggling with every opposition which ignorance, credulity, and persecution could have brought against it, ascended at last the imperial throne. Maxentius, on the other hand, from hatred to his rival, exerted himself in the most violent persecution of all who professed that religion. The Christians were at this time extremely numerous, both at Rome and in the provinces, and it became, therefore, an event of the greatest joy to them, that Maxentius in the first battle was defeated and slain, leaving Constantine undisputed master of the Roman empire.

The first step of his administration was to break up the prætorian bands, a measure equally politic for his own safety and agreeable to the people. He re-established the senate in its ancient deliberative rights; commenced the repair of Rome, and the other cities of Italy; and used his utmost endeavour by a firm, though a gentle and equitable administration, to promote the happiness and interest of his people. Aware of the danger of disgusting the public mind by any sudden or violent innovation upon those opinions which long custom had rendered sacred, he accepted the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and in his first edicts, only granted to the Christians the public exercise of their religion; but his own example daily increased the number of proselytes, and he soon after began to establish churches for their worship. In these first years of his reign, the civil administration of Constantine was excellent. Every approach to oppression in

the officers of the revenue met with an immediate check, and he abrogated that cruel institution which inflicted corporal punishment upon those who were debtors to the state. His maxim was, that equity ought ever to preponderate over strict law, and ought to determine all cases wherein law is doubtful. But amid these excellent features in the character of Constantine, it is painful to remark that a disposition to cruelty appeared, which sullied much of his glory. In an expedition against the Franks, a northern nation who had begun to make inroads on the Gauls, the prisoners taken in war were, with the most shocking inhumanity, exposed in the amphitheatre to be devoured by wild beasts.

One Licinius, a Dacian, had by Galerius been nominated Cæsar, and on the death of Galerius maintained possession of the Asiatic provinces. Constantine had not thought it expedient to dispute his right, while as yet his own was not thoroughly established, and had even virtually acknowledged it by giving him his sister in marriage. Licinius was a persecutor of the Christians, and this became soon a sufficient ground for Constantine to shake him off. He accordingly declared war against him as an enemy to God, and, arming a fleet of 200 galleys, and 130,000 men, he attacked him in Asia, and gained a complete victory. His rival was made prisoner, and was promised his life, but this promise was shamefully and dishonourably broken, and Licinius strangled in prison.

Constantine, now absolute and sole master of the empire, proceeded openly to signalize his zeal

for Christianity. He ordered the temples to be shut, and prohibited sacrifices, but at the same time published an edict in the East, allowing universal toleration. This edict, however, which certainly seemed inconsistent with the general tenour of his principles, could not prevent the rising of a fanatical zeal for their peculiar tenets in the minds both of Christians and of heathens, which soon produced the most violent and irreconcilable animosities. Constantine, returning from his Asiatic expedition, alienated the minds of his Roman subjects by two extraordinary acts of cruelty, the murder of his son Crispus and his step-mother Fausta, upon slight suspicions of some infamous connexions having taken place between them. Many other individuals of rank were put to death on the evidence of informers, and on the most vague and general suspicions. The cruelty of the emperor became excessive. Rome cried out against him as a second Nero, and the populace openly insulted him.

Whether it was the disgust he conceived at this decided change in the minds of the Romans, or solely an ambitious and unsettled disposition which led to his design of altering the seat of empire, it is not easy to determine. He fixed his eyes, however, on Byzantium, to which he gave the name of Constantinople. He erected there the most superb structures; and in order to people his new city, he made a law by which no Asiatic should have the right of disposing of his estate by testament, unless he possessed a dwelling-house in Constantinople. Those, again, who resided there were gratified by a variety of alluring

privileges; and by means of these he drew the poorer inhabitants from Rome, whilst the richer voluntarily followed the prince and his court. The grandees brought with them their slaves, and Rome in a few years became almost depopulated. Italy was also greatly exhausted of her inhabitants, and Constantinople swelled at once to the most overgrown dimensions. When the empire was thus divided, all riches naturally centered in the new capital. At this period, the German mines were unknown, those of Italy and Gaul were inconsiderable, as were also those of Spain. Italy was now a waste of desolated gardens. It had no pecuniary supplies from commerce, and, being still subjected to the same taxes as when it was the seat of empire, its miserable situation may be easily conceived.

After thus weakening or rather annihilating the ancient capital of the empire, Constantine drew off from the frontiers the legions which were stationed on the banks of the large rivers, and distributed them into the provinces. This measure had two most pernicious effects. It left the frontiers to the mercy of the barbarous nations, and enervated the troops by the effeminate pleasures of the great cities. Luxury, which, in all its different shapes, pervaded even the extremities of the empire, reigned absolute in the centre. Constantine himself in every thing affected the Asiatic splendour and ceremonial. He wore the diadem, and assumed a number of high-sounding, empty titles; his amusements were at once costly and effeminate; his festivals and public spectacles most profusely luxurious. To-

wards the conclusion of his reign, the Goths, making another invasion, were repulsed and defeated, but, by imprudently raising many of them to offices of dignity, he gave to these barbarians a kind of footing in the Roman empire.

Sapor II., king of Persia, having made an inroad upon Mesopotamia, Constantine marched against him. He repulsed the Persian troops, but after the victory, fell sick at Nicomedia, and there died at the age of sixty-three, and in the thirtieth year of his reign. His character cannot easily be drawn with impartiality. Talents and ability in no common degree he certainly possessed; but as to the other points of his character, the professed pictures of historians are so extremely contradictory, that neither Pagan nor Christian writers deserve to be in any degree relied on. By the one class he is held forth as a shining example of universal virtue; by the other he is represented as a Proteus in every variety of vice. "We may," says the abbé Fleury, "form an impartial judgment of the character of this emperor, by believing all the faults ascribed to him by the bishop Eusebius, and all the good spoken of him by Zosimus."\*

\*. Hist. Eccl., tome iii. p. 233.

## CHAPTER III.

Change in the System of Policy and Government introduced by Constantine — Prætorian Prefects — Proconsuls — Counts and Dukes—Taxes—Free Gifts—Seat of Empire translated to Constantinople—Division of the Empire—Julian—His artful Hostility to Christianity—Jovian—Valentinian—Irruptions of the Goths—Of the Huns—Valens—Gratian—Theodosius—Valentinian the Second.

THERE were circumstances which rendered the reign of Constantine a remarkable epoch in the history of the Roman empire; and, as it is of consequence that we should become acquainted with that new system of policy and government which at this time was introduced, and which was so materially different from that constitution with which we have hitherto been acquainted, a few observations upon this subject may neither be impertinent nor uninteresting; more especially as they are connected with those internal causes which were now silently undermining the Roman power.

The distinctions of personal merit, so conspicuous under the republican form of government, were gradually weakening from the time that the imperial dignity arose, and now were almost totally obliterated. In their room was substituted a rigid subordination of rank and office, which went through all the departments of the state. Every



rank was fixed, its dignity was displayed in a variety of trifling ceremonies; and, as Mr. Gibbon has remarked, in his favourite metaphoric style, "At this time the system of the Roman government might, by a philosophic observer, have been mistaken for a splendid theatre filled with players of every character and degree, who repeated the language and imitated the manners of the emperor, their original model."

The epithet *Illustrious*, which belonged only to the highest ranks of the state, was conferred upon four distinct classes of officers and magistrates: 1. The Consuls and Patricians; 2. The Prætorian Prefects of Rome and Constantinople; 3. The Masters General of the Cavalry and Infantry; and, 4. The Seven Ministers of the Palace, who exercised their sacred functions about the person of the emperor.

The ancient consuls were chosen by the suffrages of the people, and, during the government of the first emperors, by the real or apparent suffrage of the senate; but from the reign of Diocletian, they were created by the sole authority of the emperor. A magnificent festival was held at their inauguration; and their names and portraits, on tables of ivory, were dispersed to all the provinces and cities of the empire; but they had not a shadow of power—they no longer presided in the councils of the state, nor executed the resolutions of peace or war; and their names served for nothing more than to give the legal date of the year.

The ancient patrician families had been long since extinguished, and every dignity and distinc-

tion which arose from birth had been gradually obliterated, from the time that the offices of state had become common to the plebeians. The latter emperors preserved indeed the title of patricians, but it was now a personal and not an hereditary distinction. It was bestowed generally on their favourites as a title of honour, or upon ministers and magistrates who had grown old in office.

The authority of the prætorian prefects was very different from such nominal and inefficient dignities. From the time that the prætorian bands were suppressed by Constantine, these haughty officers, who had been little less than the masters of the empire, were now reduced to the station of useful and obedient ministers. They had lost all military command; but they became the civil magistrates of the provinces. The empire was divided under four governors. The prefect of the East had a jurisdiction from the Nile to the banks of the river Phasis in Colchis, and from the mountains of Thrace to the frontiers of Persia. The prefect of Illyrium, or Illyria, governed the provinces of Pannonia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece. The prefect of Italy superintended not only that country, but Rhætia, as far as the banks of the Danube, the Mediterranean islands, and the opposite coast of Africa. The prefect of the Gauls governed these provinces, and likewise Spain and Britain. These officers had the supreme administration of justice and of the finances. They watched over the conduct of the provincial magistrates, removed the negligent, and inflicted punishments on the guilty. An appeal was competent to them from all the inferior juris-

dictions, and Constantine disallowed any appeal from their sentences to himself.

The cities of Rome and Constantinople were exempted from the authority of the prætorian prefects. They had each their own prefect, who was the supreme magistrate of the city. They were presidents of the city, and all municipal authority was derived from them alone. They had the superintendence of the police, the care of the port, the aqueducts, the common sewers, the distribution of the public allowance of corn and provision. A perfect equality was established between these dignities and the four prætorian prefects.

Such were the magistrates who formed the first class in the state, which was termed *Illustres*. Inferior to these, were those magistrates who were termed *Spectabiles*. Such were the proconsuls of Asia, Achaia, and Africa, and the military counts and dukes (*comites* and *duces*) or generals of the imperial armies.

The third class of the magistrates, inferior to the two former, had the denomination of *Clarissimi*. This class consisted of the governors of the provinces, who were entrusted, under the authority of the prefects or their deputies, with the administration of justice and the management of the finances in their respective districts.

The supreme jurisdiction exercised by the prætorian prefects over the armies of the empire was afterwards transferred to eight Masters-General of the cavalry and infantry. Under their orders, thirty-five military commanders were stationed in the provinces. These were distinguished by the titles of Counts and Dukes, and they received each,

besides their pay, an allowance sufficient to maintain 190 servants and 158 horses. They had no concern in the administration of justice or of the revenue; but they exercised a command over the troops, independent of the authority of the magistrates. This necessarily created a divided interest, which relaxed the vigour of the state. The civil and the military magistrates could have no good understanding, and a source of dissension was thus established, which had the most pernicious consequences.

Of the seven ministers of the palace, who were likewise entitled to the rank of Illustrious, the first was the *Præpositus*, or Prefect of the Bedchamber, an eunuch whose duty was to perform all the menial services about the emperor; but whose office was at the same time esteemed so honourable as to rank before the proconsuls of Greece or Asia—a strong mark of the corruption of manners. The second of the ministers entitled to the same rank was the Master of the Offices, who had the principal administration of public affairs—a sort of secretary of state, having subordinate to him a great many other secretaries, who had each their different department. The third was the *Quæstor*. In some respects his office resembled that of a modern *chancellor*: he was the mouth of the emperor in pronouncing his edicts, and he prepared the form and style of the imperial laws. The fourth was the Count of the *Sacred Largesses*, or the treasurer-general of the revenue, under whom were twenty-nine provincial receivers. His jurisdiction extended over the mines, over the mint, and even over the public treasuries. He likewise directed

all the linen and woollen manufactures. Linen, it must be observed, though not anciently in use among the Romans, had become a common wear for the women, even in the time of the elder Pliny. The fifth minister of the palace was the Count or Treasurer of the Private Estate, whose office was to administrate that revenue of the emperor which arose from his domain or territorial property, which he had in most of the provinces, and from the confiscations and forfeitures. The sixth and seventh were the two Counts of the Domestics, who commanded those bands of cavalry and infantry which guarded the emperor's person. The number of these troops amounted to 3500 men.

The intercourse between the court and provinces was maintained by the construction of roads and by the institution of *posts*; but these establishments paved the way for a most intolerable abuse. Some hundred agents, who were afterwards increased to some thousands, were employed, under the jurisdiction of the masters of the offices, to announce the names of the annual consuls, and to report the edicts of the emperor through all the provinces. These people were, in fact, nothing else but the spies of government—who were encouraged, by rewards, to communicate from time to time all sorts of intelligence from the remote corners of the empire to its chief seat; to watch the progress of all treasonable designs, and discover such persons as they should find harbouring any symptom of disaffection; they were consequently the objects of terror and of consummate hatred: circumstances which prevented their employment from being ever accepted, unless by

men of bad character and desperate fortune, who exercised without scruple the most unjust and insolent oppression.

Every institution was now calculated to support the fabric of despotism. The use of torture, from which, in the happier days of the Roman government, every one who enjoyed the privileges of a citizen was exempted, began now to be employed without regard to this distinction; in place of which a few special exceptions were granted by the emperor in favour of those of the rank of *illustres*—of bishops and professors of the liberal arts, soldiers, municipal officers, and children under the age of puberty; but these exceptions sanctified the use of torture in all other cases.

To these grievances may be added the oppressive taxes. The word *indiction*, which serves to ascertain the chronology of the middle ages, was derived from the practice of the emperor's signing with his own hand an edict prescribing the annual measure of the tribute to be levied, and the term allowed for payment of it. The measure or quantity was ascertained by a *census*, or survey, made by persons appointed for that purpose, through all the provinces, who measured the lands, took account of their nature, whether arable, pasture, wood, or vineyard, and made an estimate of their medium value, from an average produce of five years. The numbers of slaves and of cattle were likewise reported, and the proprietors were examined on their oath as to the true state of their affairs. Part of the tribute specified by the *indiction* was paid in money, and part in the produce of the lands; and so exorbitant were these

taxes that the husbandmen found it their interest to let their fields lie uncultivated, as the burdens increased in a greater proportion to the produce than their profits. Hence the agriculture of the Roman provinces was almost ruined, and population, which keeps pace with plenty, gradually diminished.

But not only were the proprietors of land borne down by the weight of their taxes; the burden was equally severe on all classes of the citizens. Every branch of commercial industry paid its rated tribute. All the objects of merchandise, whether of home growth or of importation, all the products of arts and manufactures, were highly taxed; and as the tribute on land was made effectual by the seizure of personal property, that on personal property was enforced by corporal punishments. The cruel treatment of the insolvent debtors of the state, which, under some of the former emperors, had reached the height of barbarity, was, however, mitigated by an edict of Constantine, in which he disclaims the use of racks and scourges for the punishment of debtors, and allots a spacious prison for their confinement.

To these supplies of the imperial revenue must be added those donations, called *Free Gifts*, from the several cities and provinces of the monarchy, which it was customary to bestow as often as the emperor announced his accession, his consulship, the birth of a son, the creation of a Cæsar, a victory over the barbarians, or any other event of great importance. These, which were now presents of money, came in place of the ancient offerings of crowns of gold made by the cities of Italy

to a victorious general. The free gift of the senate of Rome, upon such occasions as we have mentioned, amounted to 1600 pounds weight of gold, (about 64,000*l.* sterling,) and the other cities of the empire, we may suppose, paid in proportion.

But none of the institutions of Constantine were so fatal to the empire as those which he introduced into the military discipline. A distinction was established between the troops which were stationed in the remote provinces, and those which remained in the heart of the empire; the latter were termed *Palatines*, by way of superiority, and enjoyed a much higher pay, which enabled them, except in time of war, to indulge themselves in idleness, indolence, and every species of luxury. The former, termed *the Borderers*—who, in fact, had the care of the empire, and were exposed to perpetual dangers—had a very small allowance of pay, with the mortification of feeling themselves held of inferior consideration, and thus were, in fact, nothing else than the slaves of a despot. Constantine likewise, from the timid policy of securing against mutinies and insurrections among the troops—which were extremely formidable while the legion contained its ancient number of 5,000, 6000, or even 8000 or 9000 men—reduced the number of men in the legion to 1000 or to 1500; so that each of these weakened bodies, awed by the sense of its own imbecility, could now attempt no conspiracy that was formidable. The whole body of the army was likewise debased by the intermixture of the barbarian nations, the Scythians, Goths, and Germans, who henceforth bore a very great proportion in each of the legions.



Such was the state of the Roman empire at the time of the translation of its seat from Rome to Constantinople. An authority, vigorously despotic, preserved, as yet, the union of this immense mass, which was labouring internally with the seeds of corruption and dissolution. In the capital of the empire, the Roman name owed its chief lustre now to pomp and magnificence—a poor substitute for that real dignity, derived, in former times, from its heroic and patriotic virtues.

Constantine, with a very destructive policy, had divided the empire among no less than five princes; three of them his sons, and two nephews. Constantius, the youngest and most ambitious of the sons, soon got rid of the nephews. They were massacred by the soldiers, along with many others of his relations, and several of the principal courtiers. The brothers quarrelled among themselves; the two elder, Constans and Constantinus, took up arms, and the latter falling in battle, Constans became sole master of the Western empire. This, however, he did not long enjoy, being soon after assassinated by Magnentius, a German.

Constantius was now possessed of undivided legal authority, but had a formidable rival in Magnentius, whose party was much increased; for while the emperor indolently occupied himself in theological controversies, his best troops had sided with the usurper. Constantius made a dastardly offer of peace, which Magnentius rejected, and an engagement followed which decided the fate of the empire. Constantius was successful, though he had not dared to take the field in person, but

waited the event of the battle in a neighbouring church. Magnentius took refuge in Gaul, where, being surrounded by the imperial legions, he, in a transport of despair, murdered his mother and several of his relations, and then stabbed himself with his own hand.

Two nephews of Constantine had escaped that massacre of his kindred by which Constantius had secured to himself an undivided empire: these were Gallus and Julian. The former, Constantius honoured with the dignity of Cæsar, and appointed the city of Antioch for his residence, where for a short time he ruled the eastern provinces with a violent and tyrannical authority. Constantius, governed at that time by the eunuch Eusebius, was persuaded that Gallus, by his enormities, had rendered himself unworthy of the dignity to which he had raised him. He sent an order for Gallus to repair to the imperial court, then at Milan, which that prince did not dare to disobey. He was instantly deprived of his guards, hurried to prison, and beheaded like the meanest malefactor.

A variety of civil broils, mutinies of the troops against their generals, had weakened the force of the armies, and left the western frontier to the mercy of the barbarians. The Franks, Saxons, and Alemanni ravaged the Gauls, and destroyed forty-five cities on the banks of the Rhine. Pannonia and Moesia were laid waste by the Sarmatians, while the Persians made dreadful incursions upon the eastern empire. Constantius was wholly occupied with his religious controversies; but was fortunately prevailed on by his empress to take one

measure most conducive to the general safety, which was to confer on his cousin Julian the title and dignity of Cæsar.

This prince, had he appeared in any other era than that in which two opposite religions were contending for pre-eminence, would have shone as a very illustrious character. He possessed many heroic qualities, and his mind was formed by nature to promote the greatness and the happiness of an empire. He had completed his studies at Constantinople and at Athens. In the latter city, the conversation of the Platonic philosophers had given him a strong distaste for the doctrines of Christianity, in which he had been educated; and what, unfortunately, riveted his aversion, was the example of his cousin, Constantius.

Constantius named Julian *Cæsar* at the age of twenty-three, and appointed him governor of Gaul; but with few troops, little money, and a very limited command; accountable to a set of veteran officers, whom the emperor appointed for his counsellors. Under all these disadvantages he soon showed distinguished abilities.

In the first year of his government he studied the art of war at Vienna, applied himself with ardour to the discipline of his troops, and partook himself, with his soldiers, of every fatigue to which the meanest were subjected. Two important objects were thus obtained—a well regulated army, and a devoted affection of the troops to the person of their commander. With these advantages he soon signalized his military talents. He drove the barbarians out of Gaul, and carried the terror of his arms beyond the limits of the frontier. Con-

stantius, in his conclave of bishops, arrogated to himself the honour of these victories, and was employed in holding ecclesiastical councils, while Sapor, the Persian, with a formidable army, broke in upon Mesopotamia. Julian was now become an object of jealousy to him: with a view of disarming him, he ordered him to send the best of his troops to Constantinople, to serve against the Persians; by which means so inconsiderable a handful would remain with their commander, that the barbarians, with ease and impunity, could have regained what they had lost.

Julian prepared to obey, but the army took an opposite measure; they proclaimed him emperor, and forced him, apparently unwilling, to accept the purple.\* He still preserved the show of allegiance, and wrote to Constantius, informing him of the proceedings of the army, and of the impossibility of removing them from the province without their commander. Constantius, with amazing folly, only repeated his orders in a more peremptory style; and Julian, congratulating himself that every scruple of honour was satisfied, openly shook off his submission, and took the field to maintain his right to the empire. He marched with rapidity into Greece. Italy was his own, and everything submitted to his arms. Constantius escaped the ignominy that awaited him, by dying at this juncture of a fever in Cilicia.

Julian was now acknowledged through the whole empire. He began his reign by the reformation of a variety of civil abuses in the different departments

\* The circumstances attending this event are extremely well painted by Mr. Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," c. xxii.

of the state, abolishing superfluous offices, and striking at the root of luxury by sumptuary laws. He now gave a loose to his hatred against Christianity, but attacked that religion by a policy far more pernicious than open persecution. He began by reforming the Pagan theology; and, artfully attending to the great difference between that and the Christian religion, which, to the purest doctrines of faith, joined the most excellent system of morality, he endeavoured to give Paganism that morality which it wanted, thence confessing the excellence of Christianity by adopting its sublimest precepts. He drew up himself a plan of conduct for the priests, recommending to them a purity of life and uncorrupted integrity; thus to enforce by their example the doctrines which they sought to inculcate.\* Certain modern wri-

\* The 49th, 62nd, and 63rd Epistles of Julian, and a separate fragment on the same subject, give a very strong picture of his zeal for pagan reformation. "The exercise of the sacred functions," says Julian, "requires an immaculate purity both of mind and body; and, even when the priest is dismissed from the temple to the occupations of common life, it is incumbent on him to excel in decency and virtue the rest of his fellow-citizens. He should never be seen in theatres or taverns. His conversation should be chaste, his diet temperate, his friends of honourable reputation. His studies should be suited to the sanctity of his profession. Licitious tales, or comedies, or satires, must be banished from his library, which ought solely to consist of historical and philosophical writings; of history which is founded in truth, and of philosophy which is connected with religion. The impious opinions of the Epicureans and Sceptics deserve his abhorrence and contempt; but he should diligently study the systems of Pythagoras, of Plato, and of the Stoics, which unanimously teach *that*

ters, unfriendly to our religion, have enlarged, with much apparent satisfaction, on the great clemency and moderation which Julian showed in his treatment of the Christians—affecting not to perceive that this seeming clemency and moderation was the most artful and the most dangerous policy that could have then been employed against them; for let us observe how Julian conducted himself. He forbade the persecution of the Christians, whom he represented as deluded men, the objects of compassion, not of punishment; but declared, at the same time, that their *frenzy* incapacitated them from all employments, civil or military. Their law, he said, prohibited all quarrels and dissensions; it was not, therefore, necessary that *they* should have the benefit of courts of justice to decide their differences. He prohibited them from teaching or learning grammar, rhetoric, or philosophy. These, he said, were pagan sciences, treated of by authors whose principles the Christians were taught to abhor, and whose books contained tenets which must shock the pure morality of their religion. It is easy to perceive that this artful and insidious mode of attack was, in reality, much more destructive than the most sanguinary persecution.

This conduct of Julian would seem to argue a disposition at least entirely free from any tincture of superstition, and careless of all religion; but,

*there are gods; that the world is governed by their providence; that their goodness is the source of every temporal blessing; and that they have prepared for the human soul a future state of reward or punishment."*

in fact, Julian was, as a pagan, blinded by the most bigoted superstition. His belief in omens was ridiculous; his sacrifices were so numerous, that cattle were wanting to supply him with victims.\* The expense of these religious rites became burdensome to the state, and was universally complained of.† He was even accused of the horrid abomination of human sacrifices. His enthusiasm and fanaticism, acknowledged even by his greatest panegyrists, “almost degrade him to the level of an Egyptian monk.” “Notwithstanding his own modest silence upon the subject,” says Mr. Gibbon, “we may learn from his faithful friend, the orator Libanius, that he lived in a perpetual intercourse with the gods and goddesses; that they descended upon earth to enjoy the conversation of their favourite hero; that they gently interrupted his slumbers by touching his hand or his hair; that they warned him of any impending danger, and conducted him by their infallible wis-

\* Ammianus, though a pagan himself, and an admirer of the character of Julian, justly censures this part of his conduct:—“*Hostiarum tamen sanguine plurimo aras crebritate nimia perfundebat, tauros aliquoties immolando centenos, et innumeros varii pecoris greges, avesque candidas terra quæsitæ et mari.*” And he describes the soldiers rioting upon the flesh of the sacrifices, and daily gorging themselves with those dainties and with strong liquors, so that they were frequently carried to their quarters on the shoulders of the passenger. The enjoyment of such freedoms would very soon convert the army to the religion of their sovereign.—*Vid. AMMIAN. l. xxii. c. 12.*

† Ammianus compares him in this respect to Marcus Cæsar, to whom the cattle were feigned to have made this ludicrous complaint:—“The white oxen to Marcus Cæsar; if you conquer, we are undone.”

dom in every action of his life; and that he had acquired such an intimate knowledge of his heavenly guests, as readily to distinguish the voice of Jupiter from that of Minerva, and the form of Apollo from the figure of Hercules." In short, this wise and philosophic emperor was, in matters of religion, one of the weakest, most bigoted, and superstitious of mankind.

Fortunately for Christianity, he died at a very early age. He intended to revenge the injuries which the empire had sustained from Sapor, and prepared to carry war into the heart of Asia. After a dangerous march through Assyria, and the siege and reduction of some of the principal towns, he advanced to the banks of the Tigris. Here, in an engagement with the Persians, Julian was slain at the age of thirty-one.

It is generally acknowledged that he had uncommon talents, and many of the virtues of a great prince; had not these virtues and great talents been disgraced by his inveterate hatred to Christianity, from the doctrines of which religion he had early apostatized.\* Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem is well known. The supernatural check said to have been given to that attempt by an eruption of flames from the

\* Prudentius gives the following very just and impartial character of Julian.

" ————— Ductor fortissimus armis,  
Conditor et legum celeberrimus; ore manique  
Consultor patriæ; sed non consultor habendæ  
Religionis, amans tercentum millia Divum:  
Perfidus ille Deo: sed non et perfidus orbi."

PRUDENT. *Apoth.* 450, &c.



earth has occasioned much learned theological controversy. I shall not enter into the question; but must remark that the story is related by Julian's own friendly historian, Ammianus,\* a sincere pagan, whose evidence in this matter is therefore less suspicious.

The death of Julian struck despair into the hearts of the Roman army. A leader, however, was immediately required, and the choice fell upon Jovian, a captain in the domestic guards. Though luxurious and even dissolute in his manners, he possessed many excellent qualities. A negotiation with Sapor was in the present conjuncture absolutely necessary. But the Persian, confident of his advantages, insisted on terms dishonourable to the Romans. He demanded five provinces to be restored, which had been ceded by his grandfather to Galerius; and required, besides, several towns in Mesopotamia. It was absolutely necessary to grant these conditions, though the empire agreed to them with general dissatisfaction.

Jovian, having thus secured a peace, applied

\* Dr. Howel, in his valuable "History of the World," has given the life of Julian almost in the words of Ammianus Marcellinus, who was an officer in Julian's army, and a witness of all his exploits; an impartial biographer, for he blames as well as praises. The abilities of Julian are sufficiently proved by his own literary compositions. In his Satire, termed the "Misopogon," or Beard-hater, he paints his own character with freedom and with wit; and we learn more from it, of the real dispositions of this singular man, than from the narratives of his historians. (The "Misopogon" is well abridged by Dr. Howel, vol. ii. c. i. s. 5.) His moral fable, entitled "The Cæsars," is one of the most agreeable and instructive productions of ancient wit. For an abstract of it, see "Gibbon's Decline and Fall," chap. 24.

himself with zeal to the happiness of his subjects. He favoured Christianity, and sought to heal the wounds which that religion had received from his predecessor. He showed, in the means which he adopted for promoting it, a policy equally artful with that of Julian for its destruction. In a council which he assembled at Antioch, he declared his resolution that no man should be molested on account of his religious tenets. He recalled the banished Christians, admitting them with the pagans, equally to the exercise of all public employments: these commencements promised a happy reign; but the hopes of the empire were blasted as soon as they were formed, for Jovian died at the age of thirty-three, after a reign only of seven months.\*

The army, then in Bithynia, chose Valentinian for their emperor—a man of obscure birth, but of considerable military reputation. He was illiterate, severe in his manners, and excessively avaricious; yet in other respects deserving of the throne. As soon as he was elected, he was urged to name a colleague. "You have elected me," said he, "your emperor; it is now my province to command, and it is yours to obey. I shall choose for myself a colleague, whom I think proper, and when I judge expedient." He afterwards named his brother Valens, to whom he gave the dominion of the East, reserving to himself the West. Valens had to oppose Sapor, who now attempted the

\* The accounts of his death are various. Ammianus says, "He was suffocated in his sleep, either by the vapour of a newly-plastered room, or the smoke of coals; or that he died of a surfeit."—AMMIAN. XXV. 10.

conquest of Armenia; and Valentinian the barbarians, who poured down upon the western empire from every quarter. Previous, however, to any warlike expedition, Valentinian thought it necessary to establish a good political arrangement at home. The clergy had formerly been exempted from taxes, but Valentinian thought that, as the interest of the state was the concern of all its members, no order should be privileged. Though a Christian himself, his zeal was subservient to policy. He interfered in no theological disputes, leaving these to be determined by the clergy; and so far was he from persecuting the pagans, that he allowed them an unlimited toleration. These prudent measures prevented all religious disturbances; and the Christian religion silently made greater progress than if it had been intemperately promoted by the ardour of a zealot.

Valentinian now marched into Gaul, and repelled the Alemanni and other barbarous tribes, in a series of successful engagements. In these, however, the severity of his disposition was rigorously felt, and the Roman name was disgraced by many atrocious actions.

Valentinian gave peace to the Western empire; but the East was distracted by the imprudent zeal of Valens, who, intemperately promoting the cause of Arianism, invited a swarm of enemies upon the empire, who, in the end, entirely subverted it. These were the Goths, a people originally inhabiting the country of Scandinavia, which the ancient authors have termed the nursery of the human race; *officina humani generis*. Montesquieu accounts for those prodigious inundations from the

North, which argue an astonishing populousness of those countries which sent them out, by saying, "that the violence of the Romans had forced the people of the South to retire to the North," and that they now regorged upon the empire;\* but we know of no violences equal to the production of that effect, and the barbarians who invaded the empire retained no traces of a southern origin, but showed in their manners, customs, and laws, a genius and character entirely their own, and strongly distinct from that of the nations of the South. Some centuries before the Christian era, the Goths had emigrated from the North; and some of their tribes, the Vandals, Heruli, and Lombards, had established themselves in Germany. In the second century, a vast body had fixed their residence on the banks of the Palus Mæotis; and had thence extended their conquests with great rapidity. Under the reign of Valens, they took possession of the province of Dacia, and were distinguished by the appellation of Ostrogoths and Visigoths, or Eastern and Western Goths—the first inhabiting the coasts of the Euxine Sea, and towards the mouth of the Danube; the latter dwelling along the banks of that river. They were a remarkable people; and their manners, laws, government, and customs are highly deserving of particular attention, as the great fountain from which the manners and policy of all the European nations are at this day derived. It will not, therefore, be impertinent to bestow some time in giving a particular view of this people;

\* Mont., *Grand. et Décad.*, chap. xvi.

which I shall do when I have brought the Roman history to its period.

Julian had despised these invaders, and the terror of his name had kept them quiet during his reign. Procopius, the cousin of Julian, had attempted to wrest the throne from Valens, and obtained for that purpose the assistance of the Goths; but that emperor engaged them with success, and compelled them to repass the Danube. Valentinian, in the meantime, engaged with the Alemanni in Germany, died upon that expedition, and was succeeded by Gratian, his eldest son, who was then in the sixteenth year of his age. He had borne the title of Augustus from his ninth year, and his right to the empire was not disputed. The army joined with him his brother, Valentinian II., an infant four years old. The youth and inexperience of Gratian led him in the beginning of his reign to authorize some tyrannical and cruel acts, which appeared contrary to his natural disposition. Valens, in the meantime, in the East filled the empire with daily examples of vice and tyranny. He was detested by his subjects, and, consequently, exposed to frequent conspiracies, which, in their punishment, gave fresh display to his sanguinary disposition.

While the Eastern empire thus groaned under a vicious prince, a new race of barbarians came down from the North in a resistless torrent, which affected almost every quarter of Europe. These were the Huns, a race of Tartars or Siberians—unknown till then by the European nations; though they had long before that period been the terror of the Chinese, who are supposed to have

built their famous wall to defend themselves from their invasions.

The occasion of this irruption into Europe, appears to have been a civil war among themselves, in which the vanquished party were driven to the South. The Goths, a comparatively civilized people, looked upon the Huns as monsters; they fled before them. The Visigoths, who were first attacked, entreated the Romans to receive them into their dominions. Valens, who was no politician, flattered by their request, and immediately granted them a settlement in Thrace. The Ostrogoths next appeared, and demanded the same protection. Valens now began to fear the consequence of harbouring such a multitude of strangers, and refused their demand; but the frontiers of the empire being ill defended, the Ostrogoths, disregarding his refusal, passed forward without opposition, and overpowered Thrace like a deluge. Valens hastily concluded a peace with Sapor, the Persian, to march to the defence of that province; but he had discharged the greatest part of the old troops, trusting that these very invaders would be the defence of the empire; his army was raw and undisciplined. Fritigern, king of the Goths, cut them to pieces in the battle of Adrianople, and Valens himself perished in the engagement. The northern strangers were now unresisted. They ravaged Achaia and Pannonia; the considerable towns alone holding out against them, and this only because they knew not the art of besieging.

Gratian, in this critical juncture, arriving at Constantinople, assumed Theodosius, an able general, for his colleague in the empire, who

every sense, worthy of his dignity. To great courage and magnanimity Theodosius joined an honourable and virtuous disposition; though, as Christian emperor, his character has, of course, been aspersed by Pagan historians. He enacted many excellent laws. His religious zeal perhaps transported him too far; certainly some of the laws which he framed against heretics are rigorous to the extreme. Gratian, his colleague, was equally pious and yet more imprudent. He provoked Pagans by persecution and the destruction of temples, so that he became, from that cause alone, an object of hatred to the greatest part of subjects.

Upon the death of Gratian, his infant son, Valentinian II., succeeded to the western empire, and was, in the meantime, governed by Theodosius as his guardian. This prince, who obtained who deserved the epithet of *great*, ruled the empire for eighteen years with consummate ability. He was at first obliged to yield the government of Britain and the Gauls to the prefect Maximus, who had obtained the absolute command of the provinces in those provinces, and, confident of his powers, had demanded a share of the empire. This concession emboldened Maximus to aim at the sovereignty of the whole. He invaded Italy, took possession of Rome, while the young Valentinian, with his mother Justina, fled for refuge to Thessalonica. But Theodosius marched against the usurper, defeated him in a decisive engagement in Pannonia, and allowed him to be secured by the victorious troops. Valentinian was thus restored to the sovereignty of the West

by the arms of his guardian. But the young prince soon after fell a sacrifice to the treason of one of his generals, Arbogastes; and Theodosius, defeating Arbogastes, remained sole emperor of the East and West.

The character of this prince was worthy of the best ages of the Roman state. The wisdom of the laws of Theodosius procured him the esteem and affection of his subjects; the success of his arms kept in terror the surrounding barbarians. His domestic character was amiable and respectable, though sullied at times by an intemperance of passion which led him into some acts of inhumanity, for which, in his cool moments, he suffered the keenest remorse. Under a series of princes like Theodosius, the Roman empire might have once more regained its ancient dignity and splendour; but the weakness of his successors blasted all those pleasing expectations.

The reign of Theodosius was the era of the downfall of the Pagan religion in the Roman empire, and the full *establishment of Christianity*. As this great revolution in human affairs is of the utmost importance, in far more than a mere political point of view, we shall consider it at some length in the succeeding chapter.

END OF VOL. III.



